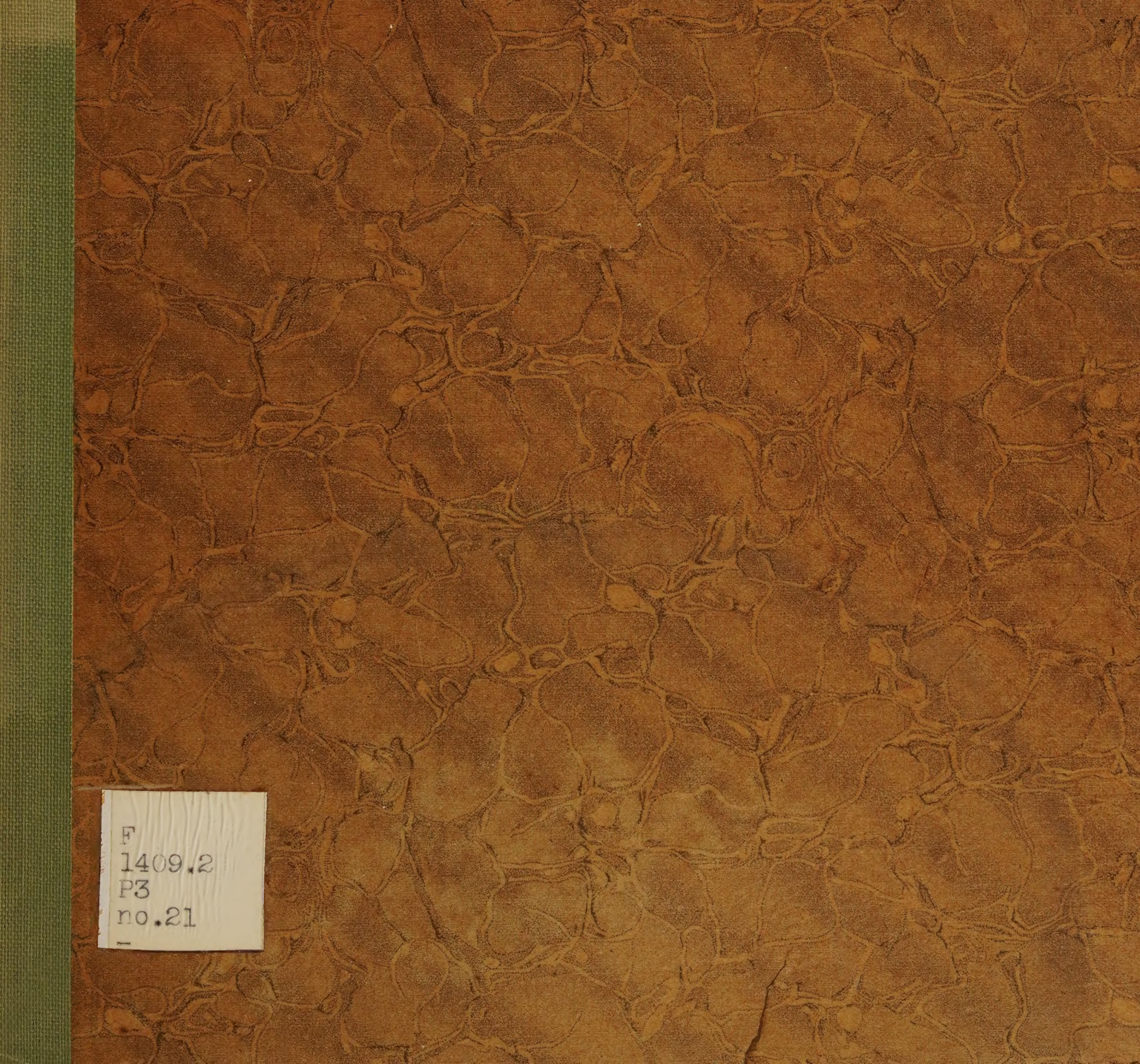




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VENEZUELA



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A M E R I C A N R E P U B L I C S S E R I E

C A R I B B E A N S E A

VENEZUELA

SCALE OF MILES

0 50 100 150 200

NATIONAL CAPITAL

CAPITALS OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

BOUNDARIES OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY SYSTEM

OTHER HIGHWAYS

RAILROADS

HIGHWAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| ① Federal District | ⑭ Monagas |
| ② Anzoátegui | ⑮ Nueva Esparta |
| ③ Apure | ⑯ Portuguesa |
| ④ Aragua | ⑰ Sucre |
| ⑤ Barinas | ⑱ Táchira |
| ⑥ Bolívar | ⑲ Trujillo |
| ⑦ Carabobo | ⑳ Yaracuy |
| ⑧ Cojedes | ㉑ Zulia |
| ⑨ Falcón | |

FEDERAL TERRITORIES

- | |
|-----------------|
| ㉒ Amazonas |
| ㉓ Delta Amacuro |

Dependencies (Islands)



BRITISH
GUIANA

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VENEZUELA

A M E R I C A N R E P U B L I C S S E R I E S

No. 21

1960

PAN AMERICAN UNION
GENERAL SECRETARIAT
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
WASHINGTON D. C.



THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS SERIES incorporates the basic information on each of the 21 member states of the Organization of American States formerly presented in two separate series: the American Nations and Travel in the Americas Series, both of which will be superseded by the new series upon its completion.

This series is prepared under the direction of Lyn S. Manduley, Chief Publications Editor, Editorial Division, Department of Public Information, Pan American Union, Washington, D.C.; this number, by Rosemary S. Kennedy.

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Christopher Columbus, sailing between the island of Trinidad and the South American mainland on his third voyage to the New World, discovered the land later christened Venezuela on August 1, 1498. "I anchored in a river," wrote Columbus in his Journal, "and many people came out and told me that they called this land Paria." Thus the Peninsula of Paria on the northeastern tip of South America was the first place on the American continent where Europeans landed, according to Samuel E. Morison, eminent authority on the voyages of Columbus.

Upon reaching the vast delta of the Orinoco River, which he described as a "fresh-water sea," Columbus concluded that the lush green lowlands were the Earthly Paradise because, he wrote, "all men say that it is at the end of the Orient, and that is where we are." Convinced that he had finally reached a part of India, Columbus sent a glowing report of his discovery to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. "In this blessed land," he wrote, "I found the mildest climate and the lands and trees very green and as beautiful as in April in the gardens of Valencia . . . and the people there are of a very lovely stature and many wear pieces of gold around their necks and some have pearls wound around their arms. These are great proofs that this is the Earthly Paradise."

This news touched off a frenzied quest for pearls and for the fabled city of El Dorado by the Spaniards who followed Columbus. First among them were Amerigo Vespucci and Alonso de Ojeda, whose expedition along the shores of the Caribbean led to the discovery of Lake Maracaibo and the naming of the land. The native huts built on piles above the waters of the lake reminded Ojeda of Venice; so he called the land Venezuela, Spanish for "Little Venice." Soon the shores of the Caribbean became famous as the Pearl Coast and in 1507 the first Spanish settlement, Nueva Cádiz, was established on the island of Cubagua as a base for pearl fishing.

For more than four centuries the greatest treasures of the land remained undiscovered—hidden beneath the waters of Lake Maracaibo and locked within the "lost

world" of the Gran Sabana. Then a new era of re-discovery began for Venezuela in the first decades of the twentieth century. Geologists discovered in the steaming Maracaibo basin the "liquid gold" of vast petroleum deposits, now estimated to comprise between six and seven per cent of the world's total reserves. Oil is not the only "buried treasure" of recent discovery. In Venezuela's remote Guiana Highlands largely unexplored and unexploited for centuries, an equally sensational strike was made in 1947, when the now famous "iron mountain" Cerro Bolívar was discovered.

This land of oil and iron is also a land of orchids and diamonds, of snowy Andean peaks and emerald jungles, of the mighty Orinoco and the world's highest waterfall Angel Falls—discovered by the North American pilot-pro prospector Jimmy Angel in the mysterious Gran Sabana, setting for W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions*. In 1951, one of the great mysteries of South American geography was solved when the headwaters of the Orinoco River were located within the boundaries of Venezuela by an official expedition of the Venezuelan government.

Thus, for Venezuela, the "age of discovery" seems far from having come to an end. On the contrary, the monotonous and limitless llanos, as Venezuela's grassy plains are called, and the once inhospitable lowlands have taken on new horizons. The drab, unpromising existence they afforded for centuries is now being transformed into unlimited opportunities.

Since World War II this "land of opportunity" has been attracting more and more people from all parts of the world. They include engineers, geologists, scientists, architects, and builders of bridges, highways, and oil refineries; immigrants from the Old World who want to start life afresh in the New; investors, businessmen, manufacturers, exporters and importers; students and scholars; and equally important, an increasing number of tourists. In 1958, Venezuela reported a 27 per cent increase in tourism, with 34 per cent of all visitors coming from the United States. All are discovering an exciting new Venezuela.

VENEZUELA REDISCOVERED

Venezuela is the sixth largest country in South America, covering an area of 352,150 square miles; it is about the size of Texas and Oklahoma combined and is larger than any country in Europe except Russia. Venezuela's 1,750-mile-long Caribbean coast line was famed as the Spanish Main along which explorers, conquerors, and pirates sailed in times past, living adventures more thrilling than fiction. On the north, the precipitous slopes of the Coastal Range plunge down into the waters of the Caribbean from a height of 5,000 feet. In the west, running in a northeast-southwest direction, is Venezuela's Andean chain, which rises above the level of perpetual snow. The peaks of Bolívar and Humboldt are over 16,000 feet high. Below these giants stretches the smooth expanse of Lake Maracaibo, hot, tropical, and rich with oil. East of the mountain barrier lie the rolling llanos of the Orinoco River basin; and south of the river are the practically unexplored, thickly-forested Guiana Highlands which make up about one-half of the national territory. Margarita Island is the largest of some 72 islands included in the nation's total area.

The Orinoco River and the mountain systems divide the country into four distinct regions: the Northern Highlands, the Maracaibo Basin, the Orinoco Llanos, and the Guiana Highlands. Each constitutes a small world in itself, because of marked contrasts in climate, topography, and vegetation. Although the entire country lies within the Torrid Zone, the climate varies greatly with the altitude of the different regions. The Caribbean coastal area and the Maracaibo Basin are hot and humid. The Northern Highlands are temperate for the most part and the chief centers of population—Caracas, Valencia, Mérida, Barquisimeto, and San Cristóbal—are situated in mountain valleys at 2,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level. The llanos of the Orinoco region have a dry season, or summer, from December through April, and a rainy season corresponding to winter from May to November. The Guiana Highlands are temperate in the portion known as the Gran Sabana and tropical on the fringes of the plateau.

Whether you visit Venezuela for business or pleasure,



The Autopista links the Caribbean and Caracas

you will no doubt spend some time in Caracas, capital of the republic and one of America's most beautiful cities. Travelers arriving by ship generally disembark at La Guaira, seaport for Caracas and one of the principal gateways to South America. Air travelers arrive at the International Airport at nearby Maiquetía; both ports of entry form part of Caracas' metropolitan area and present a magnificent panorama from both sea and air.

The ancient port city of La Guaira—a famous pirate rendezvous of the Spanish Main—rises from the harbor and up the mountain on terraces hewn from rock, with La Silla peak towering behind it to a height of 9,000 feet. Steep narrow streets climb sharply up from the bustling port to the pastel-tinted houses of the upper town. This is Venezuela's chief port and one of the best-equipped in the Hemisphere. Stretching to east and west is a string of sparkling white beaches and the luxurious resorts of Macuto, El Palmar, Catia-la-Mar and others; also the unique "vacation city" of Los Caracas, constructed for the benefit of the working people of the capital and its environs.

The ten-mile trip to Caracas from La Guaira, or Maiquetía, on the spectacular Autopista is in itself an unforgettable experience. From the sparkling Caribbean, this four-lane superhighway climbs the Central Range to an altitude of 3,000 feet, then descends through a mountain pass to the capital. This tremendous feat of engineering, achieved by the combined skill of national and foreign contractors, typifies the boldness and imagination of the Venezuelans who are transforming their country from the old pattern to the new. It is the first of the many ultra-modern innovations that the visitor to Venezuela will discover. Built by the Venezuelan Government at an outlay of six and a half million dollars per mile, the Autopista is paying for itself by means of tolls.

Caracas

Birthplace of Simón Bolívar and cradle of the independence movement against Spain, historic Caracas



La Guaira — one of the principal gateways to South America



The modern suburb of Altamira

symbolizes national achievement and progress. Santiago de León de Caracas was named for its patron saint and for the proud Indian nation conquered by the Spaniards. The city occupies a garden-like valley rimmed by the majestic Avila Mountains, which form a rugged barrier between the valley and the Caribbean.

Caracas is separated into two distinct sectors—the ancient city, with its old-world charm and Spanish architecture, and the new Caracas composed of modern suburbs spreading over the hillsides and along the valley. These suburbs have picturesque Spanish names such as Altamira (high view), La Florida (flowery place), El Paraíso (paradise) and El Rosal (the rose garden). The heart of the new Caracas is the Centro Bolívar—the Rockefeller Center of Venezuela—composed of tall modern buildings, a three-level parking area, and the eight-lane Avenida Bolívar which passes through the center.

Contrasting with this modern section is the historical center of the city, Plaza Bolívar, paved with intricate mosaic patterns and shaded by arched trees. On band-concert nights, you can see the curious sight of

little boys running around renting chairs; for the *caraqueños*, as the people of Caracas are called, would much rather rent a chair than occupy one of the free benches in the square. In addition to being the favorite gathering place of the *caraqueños*, Plaza Bolívar is the center of important public buildings and other points of interest for the visitor.

On the east side of the Plaza is the Cathedral of Caracas, built in 1665-74. The façade of this massive colonial church has been left intact and the interior has been gradually beautified. There are priceless paintings hanging on the walls—the *Resurrection* by Rubens; *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple* by the Spanish painter of virgins, Murillo, and *The Last Supper* by the famous Venezuelan artist Arturo Michelena. The Casa Amarilla (yellow house) across the square, was once the presidential palace and now houses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the National Pantheon, to the north of the Plaza, Simón Bolívar and other revolutionary heroes are buried. Among other interesting places to visit are the Palace of Justice where the Declaration of Inde-



A corner at the
Colonial Museum

pendence was signed, the Capitol which occupies an entire city block southwest of the plaza, and the Casa Natal where Simón Bolívar was born. The typical Spanish architecture of this house is a reminder of the rich heritage of the country.

It is easier to find your way around the city if you keep in mind the fact that Caracas is divided into four quarters by two main avenues, Avenida Fuerzas Armadas and Avenida Urdaneta, which cross to the northeast of Plaza Bolívar—one running north and south and the other east and west. All streets running east and west are named Oeste (West) 1, 3, 5, etc. and all running north and south are named Norte (North) 2, 4, 6, etc. Don't be confused if the *caraqueños* refer to a location by some traditional name unknown to you, or by the name of a landmark.

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One can appreciate the cultural aspects of Caracas by visiting the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Colonial Art, the Creole Museum, the Bolivarian Museum and the University City—all symbols of the intellectual wealth of the capital. On the south side of the Guaire River are the grounds and buildings of the Ciudad Universitaria (University City). This ultra-modern campus comprises 30 buildings and has a tremendous stadium large enough to accommodate the Olympic Games.

From the crest of Calvary Hill there is an excellent view of the city and its beautiful green valley. Facing the Hill is Miraflores Palace, the presidential residence, built at the end of the nineteenth century. The public is invited to see its attractive patio and gardens; also open to the public are various dining and reception rooms which contain fine paintings and furniture carved from native woods. At the foot of the hill is El Silencio, the city's first modern housing development. Looking at the artistically designed apartment houses grouped around a spacious plaza, one finds it hard to believe that this area was once an unsightly slum.

One of the attractions in Caracas is the fountain in Plaza Venezuela, where the eastern and western sections of the city meet. The fountain is 131 feet in diam-

eter and has five beautifully carved figures of sepiá limestone, representing the five natural wonder of Venezuela—the Orinoco River, the Llanos, the Andes, the Avila Range, and the Caribbean Coast. From the center of the fountain 22 jets of water, symbolizing the 20 states and two federal territories of the republic, rise 50 feet in the air. Across the Guaire River is the aristocratic suburb of El Paraíso in which the exclusive Paraíso Club and the Hipódromo, or race track, are located. In April an annual orchid exposition is sponsored by the Venezuelan Society of Natural Sciences in El Paraíso.

For diversion you may enjoy your favorite sport—whether it be tennis, golf, swimming, horseback riding, or bowling; you may see a good game of *beisbol*, baseball being Venezuela's national sport; or watch a bullfight—by far the most spectacular entertainment for visiting North Americans. Top-ranking bullfighters from Spain and other countries, as well as Venezuela, may be seen in the Nuevo Circo of Caracas, generally from November to February. For some, horse-racing will be the most exciting pastime of all, because of the possibility of winning up to one million *bolívares* by selecting the combination of winning horses in a game called "five and six" at the Hippodrome every Sunday.

Caracas has many beautiful private country clubs where visitors may play golf and tennis and enjoy other activities by special arrangement with the Board of Directors, or when invited and accompanied by a member. Night clubs, theaters, cabarets, and *boites* (charming little night clubs with plenty of atmosphere), are numerous in Caracas. In addition to its many beautiful Catholic churches, Caracas has those of various other faiths where one may worship on Sunday.

For a unique and thrilling experience, visitors can take a five-mile-long aerial trip by cable car—the longest in the world—from Caracas over the top of the 7,000-foot-high Mount Avila and down to the Caribbean seaside. Atop the mountain, halfway point of the ride, is a recreation area complete with ice-skating arena, dance pavilion, and a nineteen-story circular hotel. The entire



trip takes about half an hour and the trip to the hotel, only ten minutes. Avila Mountain has been made a national park by the government in an effort to preserve the beauty of this area. To the east, in the valley of Caracas, is the beautiful waterfall Los Chorros, a favorite picnic spot.

Cities of the Central Highlands

The two parallel mountain chains of the Coastal Range rising abruptly from the Caribbean comprise the Central Highlands—the heart of Venezuela's economic, political, and cultural life. Between the two ranges lie the fertile valleys of Tuy, Aragua, and Valencia. This is the richest and most productive agricultural region of the country, the chief crops being coffee, cacao, corn, cotton, and sugar cane. The greatest concentration of population is found in this area.

Maracay and Valencia, the principal cities of the Central Highlands with the exception of Caracas, are particularly attractive to tourists; both cities have many points of interest and excellent hotels. Most travelers prefer to visit these delightful cities and nearby resorts by motoring from Caracas down the scenic Trans-Andean Highway (a sector of the Pan American Highway). Maracay is 68 miles from the capital and Valencia another 40 miles. There is also train service.

About 15 miles west of Caracas is the garden-like resort Los Teques, located in the highlands at 4,000 feet above sea level. At San Mateo, farther on, are the country estate which once belonged to Simón Bolívar and is now a museum (Museo de Armas), the church he attended, and historic landmarks in the struggle for independence. An Historical Museum now marks the spot where one of Bolívar's captains gave his life in blowing up a munitions dump to prevent the Spanish soldiers from capturing it. Among the many beautiful shade trees that arch the highway is the ancient Samán de Güere, under which Bolívar once camped during a battle in the valley.

The scenery on the way to Maracay is magnificent, with purple-blue mountains rising from the lush green valley surrounding beautiful Lake Valencia, near which Mara-



Simón Bolívar Center

The caraqueños enjoy concerts in Plaza Bolívar



A golf club at Caracas
Many sports are enjoyed in Venezuela

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cay is situated. Once a sleepy town of Spanish colonial homes, Maracay is today a thriving industrial city and an agricultural center surrounded by coffee and sugar plantations. Its principal industries include cotton and rayon textiles, glassware, asbestos products, cottonseed oil cake, and beer.

Among Maracay's chief attractions are the fabulous Hotel Maracay built by the late dictator Juan Vicente Gómez, who chose the city as the site of his unofficial capital and private residence; Las Delicias, the dictator's country estate, converted into a public park and zoo after his death in 1935; and a great bull ring of Moorish architecture modeled after the one in Seville, Spain. Maracay is capital of the State of Aragua and one of the country's favorite resorts.

From Maracay, one may take several interesting side trips—all within a radius of 40 or 50 miles. A favorite spa is San Juan de los Morros, noted for its hot sulphur springs and fine hotel. A trip to the beach resort of Ocumare de la Costa, on the Caribbean north of Maracay, affords a delightful drive through the Henri Pittier National Park, named for the Venezuelan naturalist who conducted his botanical research in this beautiful tropical forest full of fascinating flora and fauna. Choroní is another delightful Caribbean resort easily reached by road from Maracay.

The short drive from Maracay to Valencia takes you over hills green with shaded coffee plantations and through valleys perfumed by orange and lemon groves. The diversity of fruits is unbelievable, as you will see from the tempting fruit stands along the road. In addition to bananas, pineapples, oranges, and lemons, there are exotic tropical fruit such as mangoes, avocados, a kind of melon called parra from which ice cream is made, chirimoyas, and a delicious fruit called parchita.

Founded by Spaniards in 1555, Valencia is one of Venezuela's most historic cities, in addition to being one of the country's chief agricultural and manufacturing centers. Birthplace of writers, poets, painters, and patriots, this venerable city was the nation's capital on three different occasions and is now capital of Cara-



Hotel Maracay —
one of the city's modern hotels

bobo State. On the battlefield of Carabobo, a half-hour's drive from the city, the patriot army commanded by Bolívar defeated the Spanish forces in 1821; this decisive victory, which gained independence for Venezuela, is commemorated by a large bronze monument and an Avenue of Heroes, each one represented by a bust. Despite its rapid growth in recent years, Valencia has preserved its typical Spanish colonial architecture. Its rambling colonial homes, built around a central patio, still have their original wrought iron window grilles and iron-studded doors. A circle tour of the Central Highlands generally includes a side trip from Valencia to Puerto Cabello on the Caribbean, reached by a branch road from the seaside resort of El Palito.

The Segovia Highlands

The third largest city in the republic is Barquisimeto, capital of the State of Lara and the most important city of the Segovia Highlands. Agriculture, commerce, and industry, rather than oil or iron, account for this city's progress. In the warm, irrigated lowlands surrounding

the city there are large tracts of sugar cane, corn, and sisal; in the highlands, coffee, wheat, and oats are grown. Cattle-raising and dairying prosper in the fertile plateaus between the ridges that stretch westward toward Lake Maracaibo.

Not far from the site where Barquisimeto was founded in 1552, legend places the tomb of the daughter of the daring Lope de Aguirre, who rebelled against the Spanish Crown and dreamt of an American Empire. It is said that this Basque tyrant stabbed his own daughter to death to avoid her capture by the King's soldiers, who subsequently beheaded Aguirre. His spirit, people say, still wanders along the savannas of Barquisimeto.

The trip to Barquisimeto by car over the Pan American Highway from El Palito is interesting and varied. After leaving the coast you drive through dense tropical forests forming walls of green on both sides of the road to the next sizable town, San Felipe. Varying altitudes give Lara State a corresponding variety of climates. Barquisimeto is the western gateway to the llanos.



Spectacular
Timoncito Glacier

The Andean Region

This beautiful part of Venezuela differs from other regions of the country because of its spectacular mountain scenery. At the Colombian border, in the extreme southwestern section of Venezuela, the eastern range of the Andes divides into two branches. The main mountain column stretches northward across Colombia and the other branch swings northeastward in a curve through Venezuela, towering to heights of sixteen thousand feet in the state of Mérida.

It is possible to drive all the way from Caracas to the Colombian border in four days via the Pan American Highway. There are now two routes, since the completion of the new sector of the Pan American Highway which is 130 miles shorter than the original route. The routes are one and the same from La Guaira to Carora, via Caracas, Maracay, Valencia, and Barquisimeto. From Carora the new sector runs southwestward between the southern shore of Lake Maracaibo and the northern slopes of the Andes mountains to San Cristóbal, crossing the Colombia border at the Simón Bolívar International Bridge.

To visit the unspoiled colonial city of Mérida and the mountain resorts in the state of Mérida, travelers take the scenic Trans-Andean Highway, now designated as an alternate route of the Pan American Highway. At Arangue, the Trans-Andean Highway branches off the main route and runs to Valera in the foothills of the Andes. This picturesque, tropical agricultural town is one of the preferred stops along the route, as it has several good hotels and restaurants. In the same vicinity there are pleasant mountain resorts, among them La Puerta. Timotes, a little farther south, is perhaps the most interesting of all, for here the mountaineers, predominantly of Spanish descent, dress in colorful ponchos of red or blue, and live in thick-walled, small-windowed houses opening on inner courtyards. These hardy people are good farmers, who cultivate crops on the mountain slopes and raise sturdy livestock; their cheese and butter are famous throughout Venezuela.

After leaving Timotes, the highway begins the thrilling

ascent to the Páramo de Mucuchíes and the 13,500-foot pass through the Sierra de Mérida. The countryside is full of color and contrasting beauty. Little houses nestle under the great rocky peaks of the Andes; delicate flowers grow along the steep mountain slopes—scarlet lobelias and mauve and white orchids. The road continues to climb until it reaches its highest point; here one can see the breathtaking sight of Spectacles Lake, formed by twin lagoons in the shape of eye-glasses; Blood Lake, whose waters look red because of the sun's reflection on the snow; and Timoncito Glacier, renamed Bolívar Peak, which rises to an altitude of more than 16,000 feet.

Bolívar Park and its monument to the Liberator commemorate his crossing of the Sierra Nevada de Mérida with the patriot army in 1819, to free Colombia from Spanish rule. The road descends rapidly to the town of Mucuchíes, dropping 3,000 feet in 20 miles, and winds through the mountains to Mérida.

Aristocratic Mérida is one of the most beautiful and interesting cities in the republic, in addition to being one of the oldest. Capital of mountainous Mérida State, this typical Spanish colonial city lies in a lush valley ringed by Andean peaks, most of them over 13,000 feet high. Its quaint narrow streets are lined with old mansions having heavy wrought iron grille work and carved portals and balconies of the colonial period. The new buildings are patterned after the old ones, thus preserving the original architectural style. The cultural life of the city centers in the University of the Andes. Mérida serves as an ideal center for short trips to spectacular waterfalls, lakes that mirror the majestic mountains, and parks inhabited by many deer, bears, and birds.

The last lap of the trip to the Colombian border takes you from Mérida to the small town of San Antonio, a distance of 194 miles, at which point travelers cross the Simón Bolívar International Bridge over the Táchira River into Colombia. The largest city on this sector of the highway is San Cristóbal, capital of the state of Táchira, situated in the coffee-growing zone of the highlands.

Lake Maracaibo

In a tropical basin partially encircled by the Andean highlands of western Venezuela lies oil-rich Lake Maracaibo, 120 miles long by 60 miles wide; it is connected with the Caribbean by a 34-mile-long channel, on the west shore of which the city of Maracaibo is situated. The exploitation of the vast oil deposits of the Maracaibo Basin after the first World War transformed this sparsely-settled, unproductive area into the nation's greatest source of wealth.

The most striking sight on the lake—whether one sees it first from land, sky, or water—is the tremendous number of oil derricks which give the appearance of huge giants rising from the surface. The low, swampy region bordering the lake is hot and humid. To the south lies a tropical rain forest and to the north, dry scrub vegetation. Livestock farming is carried on to the northwest and south of the lowlands. Cabinet woods including mahogany, rosewood, and ebony come from the tropical forests of the south; while the arid region in the north yields divi-divi, used in the manufacture of tannin extract. The principal rivers in the region are the Catatumbo and Zulia.

Founded by Spaniards in 1571, Maracaibo early became an important trading center and was repeatedly sacked by pirates who sailed the Spanish Main. But it was not until the Shell Company's discovery of oil in 1914 that the town began its phenomenal growth. This lazy, sprawling sun-baked city, with its contrasting Spanish colonial section and Indian quarters, has been transformed in four decades into a thriving, dynamic oil metropolis—complete with its supermarket, Sears Roebuck Store, and modern Hotel El Lago. Second city of the republic in size and capital of the state of Zulia, Maracaibo's population now numbers approximately 400,000 inhabitants.

Tourists find Maracaibo a fascinating place to visit, quite apart from the all-important petroleum operations which interest almost everyone. Luxuriant vegetation grows in every open space and tall, graceful palm trees give Maracaibo its nickname "City of Palms". The busy,

modern port has interesting examples of old Spanish architecture, such as the San Francisco Convent and the Church of San Juan built in 1686, the oldest church in this area. Around the Maracaibo lighthouse, a famous landmark, are grouped the Customs Building, the University of Zulia, the Nautical School, and the ferry landing which connects Maracaibo with Palmarejo on the eastern shore of the channel.

Diagonally across the city, on the northwestern outskirts, is the Grano de Oro (Grain of Gold) Airport. There are excellent beaches along the picturesque shores of the lake and pleasant beach and harbor promenades. Here one sees the light fishing skiffs, built locally, and fishermen who like to sing old creole songs as they mend their nets. One of the phenomena of the lake region is the intermittent, unexplained lightning seen over the Catatumbo River far to the south.

In addition to the principal export, petroleum, Maracaibo is also a shipping center for products of the entire Maracaibo Basin and the Andean hinterland: coffee, bananas, cotton, coconuts, rice, cattle and hides. Completion of the dredging of the 16-mile bar between the lake and the sea outlet has opened Lake Maracaibo to ocean-going ships, thus transforming the lake port into a seaport. Local industry includes large pottery and porcelain works, cement factories, a slaughterhouse with salting facilities and deep-freeze storage plants, and breweries and distilleries.

North of Lake Maracaibo two peninsulas stretch into the Caribbean like arms, partially enclosing the Gulf of Venezuela. The eastern arm, called the Peninsula of Paraguaná, is an extension of the Segovia Highlands; much of it is arid and barren. Coro, capital of Falcón State, is strategically situated near the foot of the peninsula. It was one of the earliest permanent settlements and the first capital of the colony; its ancient Spanish church is said to be the first one erected in Venezuela. In addition to plane and highway connections with the rest of the country, Coro has a port (La Vela) eight miles distant.

Visitors relax and have fun
at the Hotel del Lago
in Maracaibo



Creole Petroleum Company
installations at Lake Maracaibo



The petroleum industry accounts for the present-day growth and importance of the Paraguaná Peninsula, on which the Shell and Creole companies have built large oil refineries at Punta Cardón and Amuay. One of the most surprising and unique sights that impress travelers in this remote region is the town of Judibana, which has blossomed on the flat desert near Amuay Bay since the end of World War II. This is the newest and most modern of the oil towns built by the Creole Petroleum Corporation to house its workers. However, the company takes pride in the fact that Judibana differs from the typical old-time camp or company town in that it is an "open" suburban community, in which employees own their own homes. In addition to the many private business establishments, the residents enjoy a modern community center, movies, and television.

Venezuelan territory stretches northward up the Guajira Peninsula in a narrow band of desert coast facing the Gulf of Venezuela. The principal inhabitants of this barren peninsula, on which the northern extension of the Andes tapers off, are the Guajira Indians. Their way of life remains virtually unchanged by modern civilization and the women attract particular attention by their bizarre make-up and colorful native dress.

The Orinoco River

Famous in history and legend, the Orinoco River traverses the country for a distance of 1,700 miles from its headwaters in the Parima Sierra, near the Venezuelan-Brazilian border, to the Atlantic Ocean, where its enormous delta fans outward over roughly 9,000 square miles of tropical forested jungle. This great river, one of the major river systems of South America, is navigable for many miles by ocean-going vessels. The Orinoco and its tributaries provide an estimated 10,000 miles of waterways navigable by craft of different draughts and form the principal transportation system for nearly four-fifths of the country. South of the Orinoco lie the Guiana Highlands and to the north and west, the llanos.

The Llanos

Venezuela's great plains—named by the Spaniards

llanos, meaning flat or level—cover almost one-third of the total national territory. The plains are drained by the Apure, the Arauca, and other tributaries of the Orinoco and are crisscrossed by countless canals and channels. Despite their apparent uniformity and monotony, the llanos are covered by an interesting variety of vegetation: the grassy savannas spotted with trees and patches of flowers; the *pajonal*, resembling a sea of tall, dense grass; and the extensive forest areas called *selvas*, which include fine mahogany, cedar, and balsam trees.

Cattle-raising has been this region's chief industry ever since cattle were first introduced on the llanos by Spanish settlers in 1548. Ciudad Bolívar, situated on the Orinoco River 200 miles from its mouth, is the chief eastern outlet and central market for the livestock of the southern llanos. San Fernando de Apure on the Apure River is the principal city and cattle center of the western llanos; it is accessible by river steamers, by road from Caracas, or by plane.

Capital of the state of Apure, San Fernando is one of Venezuela's most historic cities and center of a region made fascinating by the activities and customs of its inhabitants. Fought over by the Spanish and patriot armies, San Fernando was headquarters for campaigns led by Bolívar and his general Páez, "the Lion of the Apure" who, with his cavalry troops, attacked the boats held by the Spaniards; they swam their horses into the river and captured the vessels, thus making possible the crossing of Bolívar's troops.

Flying low over this region, one can see vast cattle ranches and sometimes a herd of wild horses—probably descendants of the Spanish-Arab breed originally brought over by the *conquistadores*. The cowboys of Venezuela's "Wild West", called *vaqueros* as well as *llaneros*, are skilled horsemen. Among the tricks they use to capture and tame wild horses is one known as the *enamorado* (Spanish for "one in love"), by which the *vaqueros* turn loose a number of tame mares among the wild young colts; before they know it, the colts are caught, roped, and tied in the corral. A popular country sport called *coleados* consists of chasing bulls on



Fish abound in the wide Orinoco River

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A typical llanero



horseback and catching them by the tail. The Candelaria Ranch near San Fernando is famous as the locale of Rómulo Gallegos' novel *Doña Bárbara*, considered one of the greatest of contemporary Latin American novels.

The extraordinary variety and beauty of bird life found in the llanos, and particularly along the Apure, makes the region a veritable paradise for the ornithologist. The brilliant plumage of macaws and screaming parrots splashes the green-walled riverbanks with vivid colors. So numerous are the snowy herons and egrets that they make great patches of white on the landscape. Outstanding among song-birds are the *turpiales*, known by their glorious bugle notes. The water, as well as the land and sky, abounds in fascinating species such as the electric eel; and alligator-hunting is not only an exciting sport but a lucrative business. All this and much more await those who seek new sights to discover in Venezuela's unspoiled hinterland.

The Guiana Highlands The Gran Sabana

The Guiana Highlands

Another region of Venezuela that is rapidly being rediscovered by twentieth-century explorers and travelers is the Guiana Highlands. This remote and thinly populated area lying south of the Orinoco River comprises roughly half of the national territory and encompasses the state of Bolívar, Venezuela's largest state. Rising like an island in a sea of jungle, this vast plateau varies in elevation from 2000 to 5000 feet, with isolated peaks and ranges rising to more than 8000 feet.

Ciudad Bolívar, the state capital and gateway to the Guiana Highlands, is rapidly becoming a "boom town" due to its strategic location on the Orinoco River some fifty miles north of the iron mines of Cerro Bolívar. It is the main shipping and distribution center for the southern llanos and the Guiana Highlands. From the high levee along the waterfront, one may watch a fascinating panorama of river traffic. Ocean-going vessels bound for foreign ports transport a variety of products including rubber, balata, tonka beans, gold, diamonds, and hides from Ciudad Bolívar to the Atlantic, a distance of about 200 miles.

This historic city, originally named Angostura and home of the famous bitters, was founded in 1532. In the center of the city, facing the Plaza Bolívar, is the mansion in which the Congress of Angostura met to proclaim the Republic of Greater Colombia and to elect Simón Bolívar its President in 1819. There are other interesting colonial buildings including the beautiful cathedral. In the War of Independence, Ciudad Bolívar played an important part. From here, Simón Bolívar led his liberating army to free northern South America from Spain. In recognition of the city's close identification with the Liberator, its name was changed to Ciudad Bolívar.

Commercial travelers and tourists can reach Ciudad Bolívar quickly and easily from Caracas and other principal cities by domestic airlines flying regular schedules. For those with sufficient time, a boat trip up the Orinoco is an unforgettable experience. Puerto Ordaz, at the juncture of the Orinoco and Caroní Rivers, is the shipping point for iron ore; this port is reached from Ciudad

Bolívar by a new 93-mile railway and a parallel highway. It is possible to travel by road from the Caribbean area through the northern highlands and the eastern llanos to Soledad on the Orinoco and to ferry across the river to Ciudad Bolívar. Motor travel is not recommended during the rainy season, as much of the highway is passable only in dry weather.

The Gran Sabana

In the southeastern corner of the Guiana Highlands, bordered by Brazil and British Guiana, rises the high plateau known as the Gran Sabana. Its most striking topographic feature is the massive table mountain Mt. Roraima, which was the dramatic setting for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Lost World*. The cliffs which frame the Gran Sabana like ancient fortresses on the north, east, and west form an almost insurmountable barrier.

Locked in this "lost world," recently rediscovered by expeditions, is spectacular scenery—swift rivers, rugged gorges, majestic waterfalls, and jungles abounding in exquisite wild orchids. But vastly more important to the national economy are the region's mineral deposits, notably gold, diamonds, and iron. Discovery of the important El Pao iron mines in 1941 was followed in 1947 by the finding of one of the world's richest iron ore deposits in a hogback ridge long called La Parida. This "iron mountain" was rechristened Cerro Bolívar. About 140 miles to the east is the Imataca Magnet Field, a natural magnetic field of iron where a compass "goes crazy."

From Ciudad Bolívar there are highways to Cerro Bolívar and to the country's second largest iron-mining center El Pao; from the latter it is possible to motor through the cattle and farming country via Upata to El Callao, site of a gold mine once known as the richest in the world. Had Sir Walter Raleigh discovered this fabulous mine in his search for El Dorado, he might have saved his head.

In the wildest, most isolated section of the Gran Sabana's southeastern jungle area the adventurous traveler will be rewarded by the breathtaking spectacle of

Angel Falls
15 times higher
than Niagara



Angel Falls. Its discovery was something of an accident, for Jimmy Angel first sighted the falls when he crash-landed his plane on the rugged mesa top of Auyán-tepuí in 1937. Named for its discoverer, this giant cataract is fifteen times higher than Niagara Falls. It is unique in that its waters do not plunge over the edge of the mesa, but burst forth from an underground river some 200 to 300 feet below the mesa's rim.

Since it is impossible to reach Angel Falls overland, except by a well-organized jungle expedition, two Venezuelan airlines (LAV and AVENSA) make special excursion flights from Caracas over the falls. On excursions of three to four days, the airlines provide simple but adequate accommodations at their guest houses in the tiny jungle village of Canaima at the juncture of the Caroní and Carrao rivers. AVENSA makes three four-hour flights a week from Maiquetia Airport (La Guaira) to Canaima, with stops at Ciudad Bolívar and Puerto Ordaz.

Canaima, a clearing in the heart of the jungle at 1300 feet above sea level, has an even climate and cool, refreshing evenings. Its rose-colored lagoons and beaches of pink sand afford swimming, water-skiing, and fishing in addition to launch trips along the vine-festooned river banks. You may enjoy the "rustic" accommodations of a double room with private bath in prefabricated cabins, or a bed under an Indian-built shelter—in either case, under the protective covering of mosquito nets—plus man-sized meals and a bar.

Caribbean Ports and Islands

Visitors to Venezuela arriving from the north first glimpse its verdant shores over the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, whether they arrive by sea or air. Although La Guaira and nearby Maiquetia Airport are the chief ports of entry, there are others along the Caribbean which are both interesting and important to know about, particularly Puerto Cabello, Cumaná, and Carúpano, regular ports of call for many freighters and passenger-cargo ships. Definitely a "must" on any traveler's itinerary is Margarita Island, largest of the 72 Caribbean islands forming part of the national territory.



Waterfront at Puerto Cabello

Puerto Cabello, easily reached by motor from Maracay or Valencia, is the country's third port after La Guaira and Maracaibo. Situated on a protected harbor with waters so calm that the Spaniards said a ship could be moored by a hair, or *cabello*, this port serves Maracay, Barquisimeto, and Valencia. Its ancient fortresses are reminders of the port's stormy history in battling the pirates of the Spanish Main and in the struggle for independence.

The chief Caribbean ports of the northeast—Guanta, Cumaná, and Carúpano—are important shipping centers for the products of the northern llanos. They are connected by highways and regular plane service with Ciudad Bolívar and with the principal agricultural, mining, and trading centers of the northeast, notably Barcelona and Maturín. Guanta, port of Barcelona, is an outlet for the coal mined in the Naricul region and for the cattle, cotton, sugar, cacao, and tobacco raised in the state of Anzoátegui. Cumaná—site of the first permanent settlement on the Venezuelan mainland, established in 1521 with the name of Nueva Toledo—is capi-

tal of the state of Sucre and a progressive city of more than 73,000 inhabitants. Among its more important industries are modern fish canneries; its off-shore fishing grounds are reputed to be among the finest in the world. The port of Carúpano, on the Paria Peninsula, can be reached by road from Cumaná and by plane.

The famous and beautiful Caves of Guacharo may be visited by driving from Cumaná on the road to Maturín and turning off on a side-road at the town of San Francisco. Maturín, capital of the state of Monagas, is an important center for the petroleum and agricultural products of the northern llanos. Travelers wishing to visit Margarita Island by a short steamer trip from the mainland, may take a boat from either Cumaná or Carúpano.

The beautiful tropical island of Margarita has lured travelers to its shores for more than four and a half centuries. Columbus is said to have taken a necklace of Margarita pearls to Queen Isabella when he returned to Spain after his third voyage to the New

World. Famed for its fine climate as well as its pearls, the island long ago lapsed into a peaceful existence after centuries of stormy history during which its population fought off French, Dutch, and English buccaneers. Visitors are intrigued by La Cueva del Bufón (Buffoon's Cave), where the pirates were supposed to have hidden their treasures and booty.

Margarita Island is a popular weekend and vacation resort easily reached by plane from Caracas and other cities, as well as by steamer. Air travelers arrive at Porlamar, the main port and largest city on the island. Located on a tranquil bay which is perfect for water sports, Porlamar has modern hotels including the new Bella Vista, where every room overlooks either the sea or the mountains. The hotel provides facilities for amateurs who want to try pearl fishing. A nominal license fee is required and, best of all, you may keep your pearls if you have good luck at this sport.

The small but historic town of La Asunción is a living museum of the past—serene and restful in an exuberant setting of flowers and trees. Founded by Spaniards in 1524, the town preserves many historic buildings and ancient fortresses; its Cathedral is famous for a life-size statue of the Virgin, dressed in a robe fashioned entirely of pearls. La Asunción is capital of the state of Nueva Esparta.

More than 40 miles in length, Margarita Island affords many miles of beautiful drives along its picturesque and rugged coast line, with stretches of white sand washed by the turquoise Caribbean. The abundance of fish provides a variety of delicious seafood as well as a pastime for visitors. Another entertaining pastime is listening to the hospitable and interesting islanders spin the yarns for which they are famous.

The fabulous pearls taken to Spain by Columbus led to the founding in 1507 of the first Spanish town, Nueva Cádiz, on the island of Cubagua as a base for pearl-fishing. Cumaná, founded in 1521 on the Caribbean Coast, was one of the first European settlements on the South American continent. The original capital of the colony was Coro, established in 1528.



A pearl diver of Margarita Island

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Colonial Period

The Independence Movement

The Colonial Period

During the colonial period, Venezuela's political development followed much the same pattern as that of other Spanish colonies in America. The German period of exploration and colonization under the House of Welsch, terminated in 1556 by the Spanish Crown, did little to advance the growth of the colony. The ruthless exploitation and brutality practiced by the early settlers against the Indians, caused the latter to hate, fear, and resist the attempts of all white men to establish colonial administration for a long time thereafter. The pacification and assimilation of the native population were accomplished chiefly by the various religious orders of the Catholic Church whose missions slowly extended the frontiers of the colony.

El Tocuyo, founded in 1545 in a fertile valley of the highlands east of Lake Maracaibo, became the principal center of colonizing expeditions in the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly in the western and central regions. In 1567, Diego de Losada laid out the city of Caracas and ten years later it replaced Coro as capital of the colony. Thus the foundations of the nation were laid during the sixteenth century by Spanish colonizers who transplanted the culture and institutions of the mother country to Venezuela.

The territory which now constitutes the Republic of Venezuela was not a clearly established political entity during the colonial period. The original colony was placed under the jurisdiction of the Audiencia of Santo Domingo in 1526. However, during most of its colonial history Venezuela was governed by the Spanish authorities in Santa Fe de Bogotá, capital of the viceroyalty of New Granada, which later became Colombia. Finally in 1777, the colony was elevated to the category of captaincy general and in 1786 the Royal Audiencia of Caracas was created.

During the second half of the eighteenth century the colony enjoyed its greatest period of growth and prosperity. Agriculture flourished in the highland valleys, notably in the Caracas and Valencia regions. Coffee, sugar cane, and livestock production stimulated com-

merce and trade. At the same time Spain's oppressive economic policy and virtual trade monopoly built up resentment against the mother country; this was further aggravated by official discrimination against the creoles (American-born Spaniards), who constituted a substantial class midway between the Spanish royalists of the colony and the peasants and slaves.

In Venezuela as throughout Spanish America, the American and French Revolutions sparked the growing spirit of rebellion against Spain, inspired by courageous and idealistic creoles; the greatest of these were Francisco de Miranda and Simón Bolívar. Before the close of the century, isolated armed uprisings flared in La Guaira, Coro, and elsewhere; in each case the Spanish authorities imposed the death penalty on conspirators and tightened repressive controls.

The Independence Movement

Francisco de Miranda began as early as 1776 to lay the groundwork of the independence movement in northern South America. The "Precursor" of Latin American independence spent much time in France and the United States in consultation with revolutionary leaders whose triumphs in the cause of freedom spurred him on. He organized the first major effort at revolution on the South American mainland in 1806, when he sailed from New York with an expedition aboard the *Leander*, an armed vessel which was joined by two other ships outfitted in Santo Domingo. The Spanish authorities, learning of Miranda's plot, intercepted some of the ships off Puerto Cabello while Miranda fled in the *Leander* to Barbados. A second expedition also failed and Miranda, forced to flee Venezuela once more, went to England; he did not return to his native land until the patriots revolted under the leadership of Simón Bolívar.

The Venezuelan who is today honored throughout America as the great Liberator and father of Pan Americanism was, like Miranda, a native of Caracas. At an early age he inherited a fortune from his wealthy and aristocratic family; and from his tutor, the patriot Simón Rodríguez, he absorbed the revolutionary ideas



The Coro Cathedral — believed to be the oldest in South America

of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine. Having completed his education in Madrid, he married and returned to Caracas in 1803 with his bride, who soon thereafter died. Returning to Europe, he witnessed with revulsion Napoleon's triumphant campaign.

While in Rome with his friend Rodríguez, Simón Bolívar made a momentous decision which was to change the course of South American history. Standing on the Aventine Hill, he vowed to Rodríguez that he would henceforth dedicate his life to the cause of American freedom and the liberation of his native land from Spanish rule. From the moment of his return to Caracas in 1806 to the final victory over the Spanish forces in 1824, Bolívar never faltered in his epic struggle.

The return of the youthful revolutionary of twenty-three to Caracas inspired the idealistic creoles of the Patriotic Society, which became the spearhead of anti-royalist activity in the capital. Two years later, in 1808, Napoleon Bonaparte paved the way for revolt by invading Spain and placing his brother Joseph on the

Spanish throne. When the Junta of Seville, Spain's resistance government, capitulated to the French, the patriots of Caracas seized the moment to demand a *cabildo abierto*—an open meeting of the governing council. At this historic meeting on April 19, 1810, the Venezuelans deposed the Spanish captain-general and established a self-governing junta.

Led by Bolívar and Miranda, the Patriotic Society petitioned the newly-established Venezuelan Congress for a formal declaration of independence. On July 5, 1811, the Congress complied with this demand. Thus, the first formal declaration of independence by one of Spain's colonies came thirty-five years and one day after that of the Thirteen Colonies of North America. A constitution for the new federal republic, which took the name of Colombia, was promulgated in December. But the new republic soon fell into the power of the Spanish royalists and it was not until ten years later that Venezuelan independence was decisively won at the battle of Carabobo in 1821.

In a brilliant and heroic ten-year campaign to liberate the northern colonies from Spanish rule, Bolívar, supported by General Francisco de Paula Santander, defeated the Spanish forces at Boyacá in 1819 to free the viceroyalty of New Granada. In December of the same year, Bolívar's plan to unite New Granada with Venezuela in the Republic of Greater Colombia was consummated. Ecuador joined the new federation following its liberation in the third decisive victory of the northern campaign at Mt. Pichincha overlooking ancient Quito.

With Bolívar as President and General Santander as Vice President, the Republic of Greater Colombia—comprised of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador—endured until 1830. Amid the growing dissension and instability of the new republic, a conspiracy was formed against the Liberator and an attempt on his life was made in September 1828 in Bogotá. He escaped and was vindicated almost immediately, while many of the conspirators were tried and executed. Meanwhile the political situation became more acute; the city of Caracas revolted against the federation and an assembly at Valencia proposed separation from Colombia.

At this critical juncture Bolívar, who had retired from the presidency, decided to return to his native Caracas. Stopping en route at Santa Marta (Colombia), he succumbed to the illness of body and spirit which marred the years following victory. Greater Colombia had come to an end, and the Liberator who created it passed away on December 17, 1830, at the age of forty-seven. His remains rest in the National Pantheon in Caracas.

Venezuela gave to America not only a great general, whose military genius won the freedom of half a continent, but also a statesman who was a century ahead of his time in the field of international relations. As early as 1815 Bolívar promoted the idea of a "League of Nations of the New World" and to this end he convoked the now historic Congress of Panama in 1826. Although the Treaty of Confederation which the delegates of the various republics signed did not endure,

it embodied Bolívar's concepts of collective security and the peaceful settlement of disputes by arbitration and conciliation. These principles, radical in their day, became the cornerstone of the Inter-American System and are put into practice today by the Organization of American States.

The Republican Period

Venezuela began its political existence as an independent republic following secession from Greater Colombia, under the presidency of General José Antonio Páez who had distinguished himself in the war of independence. The will to achieve equality which dominated the creole patriots from the beginning of the revolutionary period, produced a social as well as a political upheaval marked by the rise to power of *caudillos*, or chieftains, from the hinterland.

In this period of transition Venezuela, in common with the other new republics of the Continent, experienced frequent intervals of civil strife caused by opposing ideologies and personal rivalries: the liberal versus the conservative, the civilian versus the military, and federalist versus the centralist.

In 1864, a federalist constitution was adopted and the republic was called the United States of Venezuela. However, the centralists regained control of the government and in the struggle for power the federalists revolted under the leadership of Antonio Guzmán Blanco, who became president in 1870. His dictatorial regime lasted 18 years, during which time he introduced many beneficial economic and social reforms. Progress was made in agriculture, stockraising, and mining; and educational facilities were greatly expanded.

In 1899 General Cipriano Castro, a cattle rancher and caudillo of the Andean state of Tachira, moved on Caracas with his "Army of Restoration," seized the executive power and held it until 1908. During his disorderly regime the country was plunged into debt and Germany, England, and Italy combined to collect their debts by force. Venezuelan ports were bombarded and the country's fleet ruined. The interven-

tion of the United States, by means of the Monroe Doctrine, brought about an amicable settlement.

Juan Vicente Gómez, who had risen to power as Castro's chief supporter, seized power by a bloodless coup d'état in 1908 and became president under a new constitution in 1910. He maintained a strong one-man rule until his death in 1935, with several intervals during which provisional presidents served. Popular reaction against his regime resulted in an outburst of freedom, democratic reforms, and the election of several liberal presidents.

After the outbreak of World War II, the sinking of Venezuelan oil tankers by German submarines and Nazi activities within the country led the government to break off diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. General Isaiás Medina Angarita, elected president in 1941, energetically met the war-time threat to the country and its economy. President Medina's regime was overthrown in October 1945, when a revolutionary junta under Rómulo Betancourt was established.

The Acción Democrática (Democratic Action Party), strongest of the political parties that emerged after the end of the Gómez dictatorship, exerted an important influence on national politics under the leadership of the distinguished novelist and educator Rómulo Gallegos. This party, composed of the country's liberal and younger elements, supported the provisional government of President Betancourt and was influential in drawing up the new constitution of 1947, under which general elections were held with the people voting directly for the president. Rómulo Gallegos, candidate of the Acción Democrática, was elected president by an overwhelming majority. However, within less than a year, the government of President Gallegos came to a sudden end when it was overthrown by a military coup led by Colonel Marcos Pérez Jiménez.

Reversing the democratic policies of the Gallegos regime, the new military government dissolved the Congress and state legislatures, dismissed the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, dissolved the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers, and declared the Acción Democrática

illegal. The Constitution was abrogated and from 1948 to 1952 the country was ruled by decree by two successive juntas. Upon the resignation of the Government Junta in December 1952, Colonel Marcos Pérez Jiménez became "Provisional President" and ruled the country until January 1958, being overthrown by a popular movement and replaced at that time by a five-man junta composed of military and civilian members, headed by Rear Admiral Wolfgang Larrazábal.

In national elections held in December 1958, the candidate for president of the Democratic Action Party, Rómulo Betancourt, received 47 per cent of the total votes cast for the three candidates. He was inaugurated Constitutional President of the Republic in February of 1959 for a five-year term.

The Constitution presently in force was adopted in 1953. It defines the form of national government as federal, representative, and democratic and vests the powers of state in three main branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial. The National Congress is composed of two houses: the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; deputies are elected by direct vote and senators by the state legislatures. The president of the republic is elected by universal, direct, and secret vote for a term of five years.

Culture and Customs

When the Spaniards explored the territory they had named Venezuela, they found the Indians divided into many tribes, each differing from the others in dialect, dress, work, and customs. The largest and most powerful of these were the Arawaks and the Caribs, the latter a warlike tribe which had invaded the mainland from some of the Caribbean islands and was engaged in conquering the natives of the coastal region when the Spaniards arrived.

In the Guajira Peninsula, northernmost portion of continental South America, lived the peace-loving Guajiros, who to this day maintain their semi-primitive society. The Indians of the Andean highlands were, and still are, more energetic and industrious than those of the

The Venezuelan People

Life in Venezuela

sultry Caribbean lowlands due, perhaps, to the beneficial effects of the invigorating and salubrious climate on their health and stamina. They lived in communities, farmed, and wove cloth for garments in much the same way that their descendants do today. Differing radically in their way of life were the nomadic Indians of the llanos.

These heterogeneous and widely-separated tribes did not form a close-knit society or nation, as occurred elsewhere on the Continent. Thus they never constituted a pure ethnic unit in the population of the country. With the exception of the Guajiros and tribes in the remote interior of the country, the Indians of Venezuela were absorbed and assimilated through conquest and colonization. They did not leave for posterity impressive archaeological ruins, sculpture, or other relics of an advanced civilization; however, their ancient folk arts of weaving and ceramics and their music and dances were passed directly from generation to generation, thus surviving to the present. Today the Indian population is negligible.

In addition to the native population and the European colonizers, a third racial element was introduced when the colonial landowners imported Negro slaves to work on the plantations. Because the slaves were taken mostly from the African tribes that were more advanced in agricultural and manual pursuits than others, they made an important contribution to the economy. By contrast, the fearful and defiant Indians did not constitute a dependable labor supply.

The Venezuelan People

The intermingling of races, nationalities, and customs has produced a virile and resourceful population numbering around six and a half million and a culture which reflects the varied influences of the past and present. As in every other nation, the character of the people varies with the different regions of the country. The llanero is Venezuela's most distinctive national type, comparable to the gauchos or cowboys of other countries. The rugged, lonely, and often dangerous exist-

ence of these plainsmen early developed qualities of resourcefulness, dependability, and courage. A skilled horseman and cowpuncher, the llanero is by nature friendly and gay—always ready to sing and dance. During the War of Independence, the llaneros mounted on horseback often turned defeat into victory under General Páez in the struggle against Spain.

The Maracucho, from the oil-rich Maracaibo lowlands is dynamic, a good worker, and a good businessman. At the other extreme of the country, the Guayanés, of the Guiana Highlands is like his own land—big-hearted and a dreamer, probably because everything around him is vast and his land is full of legends. The Andino, hardy and rugged like the peaks of the Andes, is straightforward and can be your true friend or worst enemy—there's no happy medium; he is susceptible to discipline and strong rule.

The composition of the Venezuelan population was not influenced by immigration from Europe until fairly recently, although a group of German families founded the Tovar Colony in the middle of the last century. Venezuela was among the first countries in America to open its doors to European refugees and displaced persons after the outbreak of the Second World War and is a member nation of the International Refugee Organization. Thirty-five countries are represented by the 400,000 or more immigrants now residing in Venezuela; Italians constitute the largest single group, followed by Spaniards and Portuguese. Among them are many farmers brought from Europe by the National Agrarian Institute as part of its agricultural colonization program. These and other professional and business groups from abroad are making a significant contribution to the economic life of the country. United States citizens residing in Venezuela now number around 40,000.

Life in Venezuela

There is nothing sleepy or antiquated about life in the changing Venezuela of today, for the Venezuelans are moving at an ever faster pace toward bigger and better goals in almost every phase of life and in all parts of the country. What makes this transition so fascinating,



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Farm women of the Andean highlands

A fisherman of Margarita Island





A Venezuelan family at home

particularly to travelers, is that one can still find the old and the new existing side by side, whether it be architecture, home life, entertainment, shopping, or transportation.

Caracas is, of course, the most striking example of the transition from the old to the new. Here, as in other metropolitan capitals of the Continent, the new hotels, office buildings, and private homes are the last word in luxury and modern conveniences. Despite the energy and drive with which the *Caraqueños* are transforming the capital of the country, the tempo of their life still reflects the traditional Spanish mode of gracious leisurely living. The farther one goes from the capital, the more pronounced is the Spanish influence on the habits and customs of the people.

Modern progress has not eliminated such deep-rooted observances as the celebration of Epiphany on the sixth of January, when folklore groups representing the Three Kings of the Orient sing the praises of the Christ Child in the streets of cities and villages alike; and the tradi-

tional *carnaval* preceding Lent, a gay and colorful spectacle, particularly in Caracas, where all social classes masquerade and parade in the streets together, with a display of elaborate "floats" depicting favorite subjects of national folklore. In addition to the religious and patriotic festivals celebrated universally, different regions of the country have fiestas of special local significance. All reveal the character of the Venezuelan people—their deep religious feeling, their spontaneous gayety, sense of humor, and intensely human qualities.

Education

The pattern of cultural development in colonial Venezuela was similar to that of the other Spanish American colonies. The first schools were established by missionaries of the religious orders of the Catholic Church, who arrived as early as 1513. Primary and secondary instruction began in the convents and education was limited to the upper class, with the exception of mission schools for the Indians. Many sons of the upper class families, including Simón Bolívar, were educated in

Europe. The spread of new ideas and the teaching of science were greatly retarded by the Spanish Crown and by the Inquisition, which lasted in America from 1569 to 1820. It was not until 1808 that the printing press made its appearance in Venezuela. Despite official restrictions, many forbidden books containing revolutionary doctrines were smuggled into the country and read by young intellectuals.

The greatest figure in the intellectual awakening of the colony was Simón Rodríguez, who has been called an "American Rousseau". An individualist and romanticist, he spread the new doctrines of science and the rights of man through his own land and elsewhere in Latin America. These teachings and ideals have influenced greatly the life of the Venezuelan people ever since. Bolívar and Miranda were his most illustrious students.

Simón Bolívar's place in history as a great general and liberator of half the South American continent tends to overshadow his intellectual stature and his influence on the culture of his day. He became an eager reader at an early age, history and literature being his favorite subjects; he knew the ancient as well as the modern classics and he never forgot the words spoken by his beloved *maestro* in behalf of liberty and equality.

Venezuela produced two other great intellectual leaders in the nineteenth century, whose contributions to national culture were incalculable: Andrés Bello and Cecilio Acosta. The former exercised a profound influence on the liberal culture of the entire continent, and in particular on the institutions of the Republic of Chile, where he lived from 1829 until his death in 1865.

Prior to independence, Simón Rodríguez strongly advocated reforms in primary education. In 1794 he presented a plan for accomplishing these reforms to the Ayuntamiento, or city council of Caracas, which was accepted. He was made director of the school system, but unfortunately he had to leave for Europe before putting his plan into effect.

Following independence, Simón Bolívar gave special attention to primary education as one of the major re-

quirements of the new nation. He emphasized the need for instruction suited to the child's age, talents, and temperament. "They should," he said, "study geography first, then history, and should never have so much memory work as to fatigue them." Bolívar gave 20,000 pesos to found a normal school based on the Lancasterian system, introduced from England.

Scientific studies were introduced in the early nineteenth century by José María Vargas, called the "Bacon of Venezuela," and by Juan Manuel Cajigal who established the first university courses in mathematics and experimental physics.

In the middle of the nineteenth century educational reform began to make substantial headway under the leadership of the great Venezuelan humanist and educator, Cecilio Acosta. He advocated a system based on the teaching of useful, practical knowledge in keeping with modern progress, as opposed to the traditional courses which were unchanged from colonial times. In 1856, education was removed from the jurisdiction of the church. This paved the way for free public education which was established by decree in 1870, making it an obligatory function of the government for the first time. The government sent educators abroad to study various educational systems, and teachers were brought from Germany to help staff the new schools. The first public secondary schools were established in 1909.

Today Venezuela's schools are classified as federal, state, municipal or private, according to whether they are founded and supported by the federal government, the states, the municipalities, or by private persons or institutions. In addition to the National Teachers College in Caracas, which trains high school teachers, Venezuela has six universities, four of which are national and autonomous; these are the Central University in Caracas, Zulia University in Maracaibo, Los Andes University in Mérida, and the University of Valencia in Carabobo State. Both of the private institutions—Andrés Bello University and Santa María University—are located in Caracas. The Central University of Caracas has eleven faculties and several schools and institutes.



A public school in Caracas

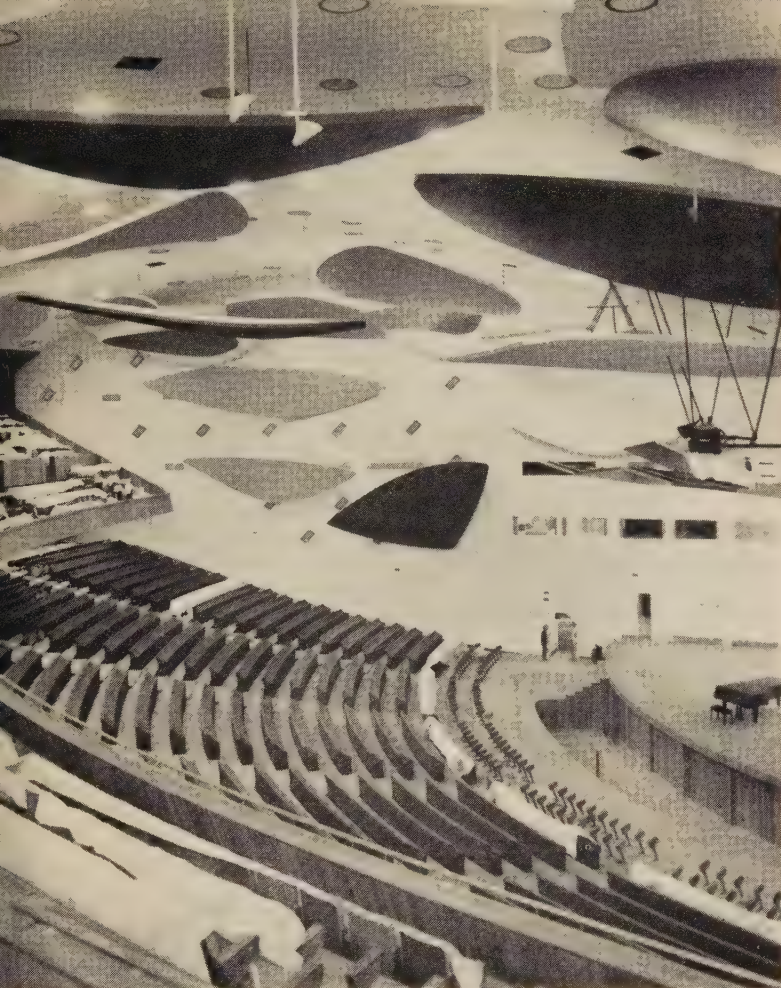
The Academies of Science, Art, Law, Medicine, and History are housed in the Palace of the Academies.

The government of Venezuela contributes to two important projects in international education. One is the Inter-American Rural Education Center at Rubio, established in 1954 by agreement between the Venezuelan Government and the Organization of American States. In addition to providing the physical facilities, the government also contributes a number of scholarships. Here country school teachers from the various American republics receive training which enables them to become "teachers of teachers," thus filling a vital educational need in the Hemisphere. The other international project is the Latin-American Institute for Forestry Research which was established in 1957 at the University of Los Andes, in its School of Forestry Science, by agreement between the Venezuelan Government and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Here scholarship students from various countries engage in studies and research aimed at utilizing to the best advantage the great forest resources of the Hemisphere.

Art and Architecture

Artistic development in colonial Venezuela was retarded by the relative poverty of the colony. Art and architecture developed along the more simple, solid lines characteristic of the modified Spanish style found elsewhere in the Caribbean area. Both Mérida and Valencia have preserved their Spanish colonial character and contain many fine examples of art and architecture. Caracas has a number of well-preserved colonial residences built in typical Spanish style around a central patio, with handsome iron *rejas* (grilles) at their windows, balconies, and massive doorways with sculptured stone or wooden portals. By contrast, the modern architecture of Caracas is bold and striking.

One of the first known painters of the Venezuelan republic was Juan Lovera, whose son Pedro, on returning from Europe, became the teacher of the first generation of nineteenth-century painters. The greatest painter of the nineteenth century was Martín Tovar y Tovar, who became director of the Academy of Fine Arts after



Auditorium of University City, Caracas

studying in Europe. Besides a whole gallery of Venezuelan patriots and statesmen, Tovar y Tovar portrayed the epic battles of Boyacá, Junín, Ayacucho, and Carabobo; the latter painting, for which he is most famous, is in the Elliptical Hall of the Venezuelan Capitol. The second great painter of the century, Arturo Michelena, worked on a grand scale, as did Tovar, in his portrayal of religious and secular subjects; his death at an early age ended a brilliant career. Tito Salas, probably Venezuela's best-known painter, belongs to the contemporary period.

Representative works of these and other distinguished Venezuelan artists are exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts in Caracas, which is the center of the country's creative art movement. Other important influences are a school of plastic arts directed by Antonio Edmundo Monsanto and the Folklore Research Foundation. Among the many outstanding contemporary artists are Héctor Poleo, Armando Reverón, Alejandro Otero, Luis López Méndez, Manuel Cabré, Pedro Angel González, and Oswaldo Vigas, who won the highest award for his work at the Gulf-Caribbean Art Exhibit at the Houston (Texas) Museum of Fine Arts in 1956. Alejandro Colina and Francisco Narvaes are among the country's outstanding sculptors.

Literature

The movement for intellectual as well as political emancipation in colonial Venezuela contributed greatly to the development of national literature, beginning in the late eighteenth century. A wealth of historical writing, political essays, and works on jurisprudence was produced by many great writers of the nineteenth century and may be found in the National Library in Caracas. Bolívar's voluminous letters, addresses, and other documents constitute a brilliant as well as prophetic commentary on government and international relations.

The literary achievement of Andrés Bello covered many fields: journalism, poetry, law, history, philology, and literary criticism. The bulk of his writing was done in the Republic of Chile. There he produced his great work on Spanish grammar, *Gramática de la Lengua*

Castellana, one of the first of its kind in which the method of linguistic science was applied to the Spanish language. Cecilio Acosta was his country's first corresponding member of the Spanish Academy.

Venezuelan prose and poetry reflected the romantic movement of the nineteenth century and the trend toward modernism at the end of the century. The foremost exponent of Venezuela's romantic literature was the poet and novelist Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde. Representative writers of the novel include José Rafael Pocaterra, who wrote realistically of the land and the people; and Teresa de la Parra who charmingly portrayed late nineteenth-century life in Caracas. Among the most distinguished contemporary writers is Rómulo Gallegos, a former president of the republic, best known for his novel *Doña Bárbara*.

Music and Folklore

34 One of the outstanding artistic developments of the colonial era was the musical activity at the end of the eighteenth century, stimulated by the priest Father Sojo. Upon his return to Venezuela from Europe, he founded the Chacao Conservatory and laid the foundation for a brilliant school of composers, notably José Angel Lamas, whose *Popule Meus* is regarded as one of the most beautiful compositions of church music of eighteenth-century America.

The marked renaissance of musical interest and activity throughout the nation during the last decade is evidenced by the founding of the Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra, the organization of new orchestral societies, free Sunday concerts, and by the large number of internationally famous artists who visit the country. Excellent musical instruction is available in both public and private conservatories. Amateur and professional opera, choruses, and children's musical groups are supported enthusiastically. Leading figures in the field of contemporary music include Vicente Emilio Sojo, Juan Bautista Plaza, Juan Vicente Lecuona, and José Antonio Calcaño.

Venezuela has a wealth of folk music and dances of Spanish, Indian, and African origin, the most popular



Devil dancers perform in a religious fiesta

being the *joropo*, *galerón*, *corrido*, *pasaje*, *golpe*, and various drum dances. The gay, syncopated *joropo* is the national dance of Venezuela and one sees it danced throughout the country. Spanish in origin and Venezuelan in feeling, it is generally played with native instruments including *maracas* made of dried gourd shells; a small harp; and the *cuatro*, a small four-string guitar. *Costumbrista*, or regional folk music, is generally played for important fiestas and special occasions. Another interesting group of folk music consists of pieces sung as an accompaniment to work; for example, washing, grinding, milking, and herding songs. One of the many regional dances is called *Los Diablos Danzantes de Yare* (The Dancing Devils of Yare), which is performed every year on Corpus Christi Day in the State of Miranda. The best source of information on the time and place of important folklore festivals is the Institute of Folklore Studies in Caracas.

Press, Radio, and Television

News of the country and of the world is widely disseminated by some 27 daily newspapers—nine of which are published in Caracas, including one in English—and by 64 radio broadcasting stations. Caracas, in addition to its nine radio stations, has three television stations; all are commercially operated except one radio and one TV station owned by the government.

Today, the people of Venezuela as a whole enjoy better health, better homes, better working conditions, and a generally higher standard of living than at any time in the country's history. Social progress in recent decades is reflected by a steady decline in the death rate, a significant reduction in illiteracy, better labor standards, a modern housing program, a social security system, new modern water supply systems, and improved sanitation and public health facilities.

Social Progress

Public Health

The public health program of the Venezuelan Government is supervised by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. As part of its program to prevent and cure diseases, the Ministry supervises 47 sanitary units, 11 health centers and 396 rural medical posts. Medical and surgical assistance is provided through a network of national, state, municipal, and private hospitals distributed throughout the country according to population density. The National Institute of Nutrition, which studies nutritional problems and gives advice to official and private institutions, also operates a chain of popular dining rooms; these provide meals of good quality at minimum prices. To correct nutritional deficiencies in school children, the Ministry maintains 319 dining rooms in schools throughout the country.

Remarkable progress has been made during the last few decades in fighting malaria and tuberculosis. Malaria, the primary cause of death in Venezuela in 1936,

has been virtually wiped out thanks to the government's intensive campaign. In 1955, the death rate from tuberculosis was 50 per 100,000 persons.

The Venezuelan Institute of Neurology and Cerebral Investigation, established in 1954, is another important agency of the Ministry of Health. The country's most advanced scientific research establishment, it also supervises the atomic energy projects initiated as a result of the agreement signed by the governments of Venezuela and the United States in July 1955.

In this hospital at Cardón
the latest medical techniques are used

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Labor Social Security Housing

Labor

The foundation was laid for a national labor movement by the Federación Sindical Obrera de Venezuela, which in 1928 had a total membership of more than 25,000. The end of the Gómez dictatorship gave considerable impetus to the trade union movement after 1936, the year in which the country's first comprehensive Labor Code was promulgated, insuring to labor the right to organize. The growth of the labor movement after the end of World War II, under a new national federation called Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela (CTV), was halted in 1949 when the CTV and its affiliates were dissolved by the Military Junta. Trade unions and labor federations were restored to their legal status in 1958 under the new government.

There are presently more than 700 trade unions grouped into 22 federations. The largest and most powerful of the confederations is the CTV; it is affiliated with ORIT (Regional Organization of Inter-American Workers), which is the regional organization in the Western Hemisphere of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The national Labor Law now in effect was promulgated in 1947 and has since been amended and expanded. This comprehensive modern code, administered by the Ministry of Labor, governs the rights and obligations of employers, employees, and workers; establishes maximum working hours at eight hours per day and prohibits labor by minors under 14 years of age in any industrial, commercial, or mining enterprise; provides for paid vacations of 15 days per year, legal holidays, profit-sharing, collective bargaining, the right to strike, health and safety regulations, conciliation procedures, and workmen's compensation.

The law further provides that persons working for an industry or business organization, or belonging to a profession or trade, have the right to organize without interference by their employers; but union membership may not be made compulsory. Employers also have the right to organize according to industries or business groups. Unions may be formed solely for the purpose

of study, development, protection and defense of professional interests, and for the social, economic and moral betterment of their members.

The law forbids workers' organizations from engaging in political activities and empowers the government to dissolve any union that does so. To obtain legalization of a union, its organizers are required to submit copies of the act of organization, charter, and a list of members to the district labor inspector; the application is subject to final approval by the Ministry. Legally registered unions are permitted to form federations and confederations.

All enterprises are required to distribute among their workers at least ten per cent of the net profits shown at the close of each fiscal year. Another important requirement of the Labor Law stipulates that not more than 25 per cent of the total labor force of any enterprise, foreign or domestic, may be foreigners; fines up to 10,000 *bolívares* may be imposed for violations of this law. To supervise enforcement of the Labor Law, the Ministry of Labor maintains a labor inspection service with offices located in the federal capital and in the capitals of the states and territories.

Social Security

Social security was introduced in Venezuela in 1944 as a result of national legislation and is administered by the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security in accordance with the Organic Statute on Compulsory Social Security of 1951. This Statute provides for two types of benefits: (a) illness and maternity, and (b) occupational diseases and accidents. The following are not presently subject to compulsory social security: farm laborers, domestic servants, homeworkers, and temporary and part-time workers.

Medical attention, medicines, and surgery are provided free of charge to insured workers and to members of their immediate families. In maternity cases, all necessary obstetrical assistance and daily cash compensation (covering 12 weeks) are provided. In addition, daily compensation is paid the worker for disability due to

illness and accidents for periods fixed by law, as well as benefits for total or partial disability, or death. Old age pensions will eventually be included in the social security system. The Social Security Institute provides medical care to insured workers and their families in its own hospitals, dental and orthopedic centers, and rest homes for convalescents.

Apart from the administrative expenses which are paid by the government, the funds for social security benefits for illness and maternity are raised by taxes paid in equal parts by the employers and insured workers; and funds covering occupational diseases and accidents are charged to employers on an installment basis.

Housing

The problem of providing adequate housing for low income and middle class families is being met by the Workers' Bank. Since its establishment in 1928 as a public housing agency of the federal government, the Bank has sponsored housing projects that have provided almost 40,000 new units.

The various projects presently under construction in different cities include apartments and individual homes, which may be rented or purchased on moderate terms; and social service projects such as schools, restaurants, parks, and dispensaries. A credit plan for the purchase or renovation of dwellings in the interior of the country is also part of the 1958-59 program, which calls for the construction of 8,500 dwellings for low income families in 40 cities and towns.

The ambitious project to create an urban community for workers in the Tuy Valley, 36 miles from Caracas, is expected to relieve the present overcrowding in the capital. Other projects are being planned for such important industrial centers as Puerto Ordaz, Caroní City, and the suburbs of Maracaibo.

Economic Growth

By comparison with other Spanish possessions, notably Peru and Mexico, Venezuela was among Spain's poorer colonies. Pearls, the first source of wealth found by

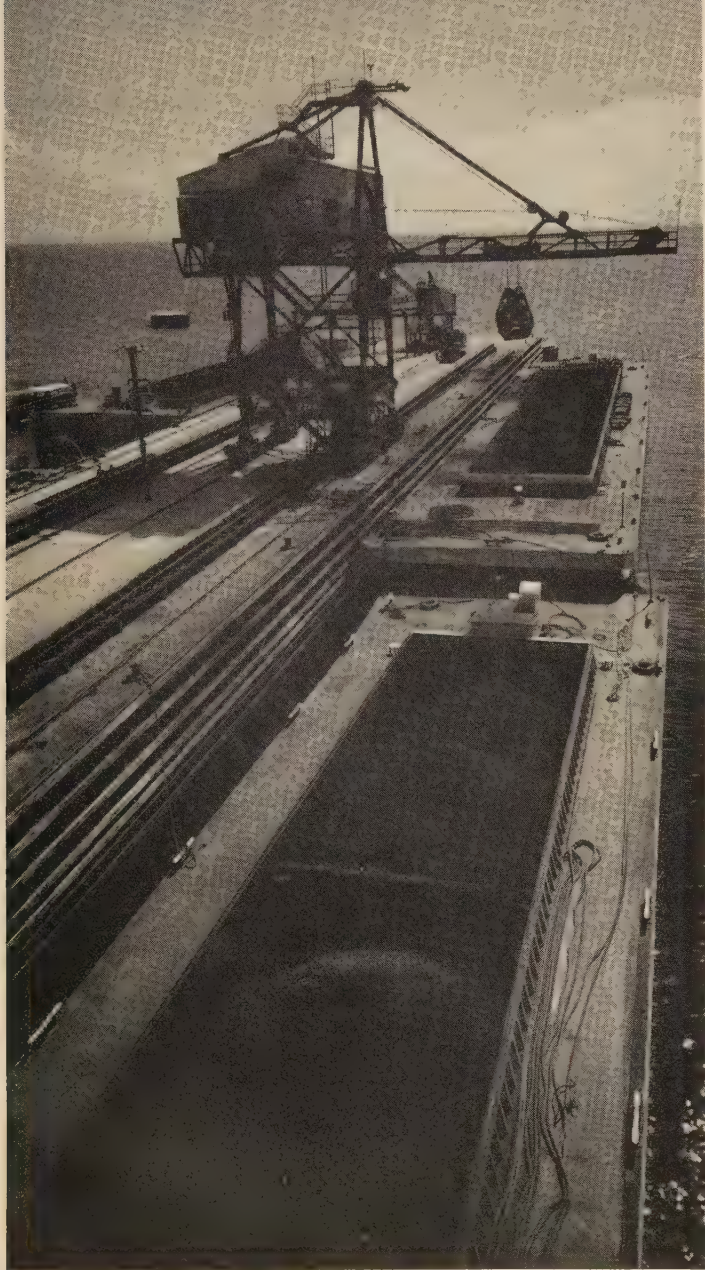
the Spaniards, netted the Spanish Crown huge sums of money until the pearl fisheries were gradually exhausted. The colonists who penetrated the interior were disappointed in their search for the mythical treasures of *El Dorado* (the gilded chieftain); hence they turned to farming and stockraising, which for more than three centuries constituted the basis of the national economy. The principal products up to the beginning of the twentieth century were coffee, cacao, cattle, horses, a limited output of gold and copper, and insignificant manufactures. A new stage in the country's economic development opened after 1910, when the national government granted the first petroleum concessions.

As a result of the discovery of petroleum in 1914, Venezuela's basic agricultural economy has been in the process of transformation during the last quarter century. Venezuela's slogan "Sow the Petroleum" is the keynote of an ambitious program sponsored by the national government to utilize the wealth derived from the oil industry to diversify the economy, and thus to end its traditional dependence upon the two major agricultural export commodities, coffee and cacao.

Petroleum

Venezuela is the world's second largest producer of oil and the world's leading exporter of this vital war-time, as well as peace-time, commodity. The rapid expansion of the petroleum industry has enabled Venezuela to achieve a balanced budget, with oil revenues supplying from 60 to 65 per cent of its income; a favorable balance of trade, with oil supplying from 90 to 98 per cent of its foreign exchange; a relatively low income tax rate; an enormous foreign trade; rapid industrial growth; and overall economic development.

The first major discovery of oil occurred in 1914 when the Mene Grande field was located east of Lake Maracaibo by the Caribbean Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of the Shell Company. The important Quiriquire field was discovered in eastern Venezuela by the Standard Oil Company in 1928, after seven years of exploration and an expenditure of almost fifty million dollars. After the initial period of exploration and development,



Unloading iron ore at Puerto Hierro

total daily production stood at 100,000 barrels in 1926 and jumped to one million barrels a day in 1946. In 1958, production reached an all time record of 2,604,840 barrels per day.

Venezuela's proved oil reserves—estimated to constitute slightly more than six per cent of the total world reserves—are found in three great basins: the Maracaibo (Zulia and Falcón states); the Orinoco (states of Guárico, Anzoátegui, Monagas, Sucre and Delta Amacuro territory; and the Barinas-Apure (states of Barinas, Portuguesa, and Apure). Taken together, these oil fields total about 62,000,000 acres. Venezuela's potential oil lands amount to roughly 88,000,000 acres when lesser areas and the continental shelf are added. Of the twelve major producing companies, the largest are the Creole Petroleum Corporation, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey; the Royal Dutch Shell group; and the Mene Grande Oil Company, subsidiary of the Gulf Oil Corporation. In 1956 the government renewed the granting of concessions for exploration and exploitation to foreign companies.

During the past 40 years a farsighted partnership has been worked out between the Venezuelan Government and United States, British, and Dutch petroleum companies which has been of mutual benefit to all. Although higher wages and improved working conditions in the oil fields inevitably attract some agricultural workers away from the land, it is significant that the petroleum industry employs only about four to five per cent of the country's working population. Venezuela's first natural gas system, completed in 1952, serves a score of cities including La Guaira, Caracas, and Valencia, from the source of production in Guárico State.

Minerals

Venezuela's principal mineral deposits are located in the Guiana Highlands in the State of Bolívar. Prior to the discovery of iron ore deposits in the 1940's, gold was the leading metal, having been mined since the Spanish colonial era.

The first important discovery of iron ore in Venezuela

was made by the Bethlehem Corporation at El Pao in 1941. Situated in an almost inaccessible region south of the Orinoco River, this deposit required ten years and approximately sixty-five million dollars to develop; it is estimated to contain 70,000,000 tons of ore, having an average iron content of 65 per cent. The first shipment of ore came from El Pao in March 1951. To transport the ore from the mines, the Iron Mines Company of Venezuela (a subsidiary of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation) had to build a 34-mile railway through dense jungles to Palúa on the Orinoco. It was also necessary to build a new port, Puerto Hierro, on the Paria Península, where the ore is transferred from river barges to ore ships bound for foreign ports.

Aerial and magnetic surveys aided the geologists of the United States Steel Corporation in locating the fabulous iron ore deposit of Cerro Bolívar (formerly known as La Parida) in April 1947, after explorations lasting over a period of six or seven years. Cerro Bolívar is a hog-back ridge about six miles long, which rises to a height of about 1,800 feet west of the Caroní River. The mountain is thickly crusted with rich ore, averaging 63 per cent iron and virtually free of sulphur. About half a billion tons of high grade open-pit iron ore have been proven to date. The total iron ore reserves of Venezuela are estimated at roughly two billion tons.

Production of iron ore during 1958 reached a record total of 15,442,309 metric tons, of which 83.5 per cent was produced by the Orinoco Mining Company (U.S. Steel Co.) and 16.5 per cent by the Iron Mines Company of Venezuela (Bethlehem Steel Corp.). The bulk of the total output was exported to the United States, other important purchasers being Great Britain, West Germany, and Italy.

To provide in part for the steadily increasing consumption of steel—an essential factor in the country's industrial growth—the government will soon inaugurate a steel mill having an initial capacity of 421,000 tons per year. This will mark the beginning of the steel industry in Venezuela. To supply the steel plant with fuel, coal-mining operations are being stepped-up in

the Naricual district near Barcelona. The country's coal deposits have not been worked extensively in the past, due to the availability of oil and natural gas as a substitute and to high production costs and transport problems.

Venezuela has long been an important source of diamonds, particularly the industrial variety. Other mineral resources include copper, lead, nickel, manganese, bauxite, tungsten, mercury, asbestos, marble, gypsum, asphalt, and sulphur. Commercial exploitation of many of these mineral deposits has not yet been undertaken, due to insufficient exploration and other drawbacks. Large deposits of salt, phosphate rock, pyrite, and limestone are being utilized by the government's new petrochemical industry at Morón in Carabobo State; this plant is now supplying the country with numerous products such as fertilizers, chlorine, caustic soda, synthetic rubber, insecticides, and petroleum by-products which were formerly imported at a higher cost.

Agriculture and Livestock

Venezuela's agricultural products fall into two categories: those produced primarily for export and those grown chiefly for domestic consumption. Coffee is Venezuela's most important agricultural export commodity, followed by cacao, sisal, sugar, tobacco, corn, and sesame. Crops grown chiefly for domestic consumption are cotton, corn, rice, yucca, yams, beans and other vegetables, and a wide variety of fruits.

Both coffee and cacao have been basic crops in the country's agricultural economy since the eighteenth century. Coffee plantations cover some 838,000 acres of Venezuelan soil, distributed in 16 of the 20 states. When coffee prices dropped in 1930, production became unprofitable and declined. However, the improved world market for coffee in recent years has stimulated production greatly. Such coffee types as Táchira, Mérida and Trujillo—named for the principal producing states—have long been famous in the world's coffee markets; all are mild types. To improve both the quantity and quality of coffee, the Ministry of Agri-



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Shelled cacao beans dry in the sun

Coffee berries at harvest time

A modern supermarket in Caracas



culture assists growers by means of Coffee Extension Drives and the Coffee Culture Training School. The Agricultural and Livestock Bank, a government agency, also helps coffee growers by advancing funds to harvest crops. The Venezuelan Association of Coffee Growers looks after the interests of the entire industry.

Cacao, grown throughout the Caribbean coastal areas as well as in the interior, varies considerably in output from year to year, depending on such factors as the weather, the ravages of disease, and price fluctuations in the world market. The bulk of the cacao crop, which averages around 16,000 tons annually, is exported. Technical and financial assistance is provided to growers by the Ministry of Agriculture and other government agencies. Exporters receive assistance by means of preferential exchange rate.

Since early colonial days cattle-raising has been the major activity of the country's livestock industry, although all other types of stock are raised for domestic needs. The vast llanos provide unlimited natural pasture lands. Hides are exported but the output of meat is consumed internally. A special program financed by the Venezuelan Agricultural and Livestock Bank aims at improving the cattle and swine population by use of better feeds, modernizing ranch installations and management, and crossbreeding with imported stock.

During the last decade the value of agricultural and livestock products has risen by 56 per cent, reflecting the remarkable expansion of agricultural activity in general. This is due in part to the tremendous growth the country has experienced, and also to the increasing investment of private capital in agricultural enterprises and the official policy of the Ministry of Agriculture. Since 1949, the Agrarian Bureau, an agency of the Ministry, has been promoting agricultural development by introducing modern methods of farming, colonizing new farm lands, encouraging immigration, distributing land to landless farmers, reorganizing the farming centers under its supervision, and expanding regional projects. Of some 24 farm colonies established by the Bureau, the one located in Turén (Portuguesa State) is the outstanding model.

Other governmental programs include agricultural research, technical assistance, vocational education in the various branches of agriculture, the construction of farm-to-market roads, and the extension of farm lands by irrigation. To further expand and develop production, the Agricultural and Livestock Bank is granting credits to more and more farmers and stockbreeders for such essential items as good seeds and fertilizers, mechanized equipment, and livestock for crossbreeding.

Industrial Progress

Since the end of World War II, Venezuelan industry has made tremendous strides both in physical volume of output and in the variety of new products manufactured; thus the country is well on its way toward diversification of the national economy. The most significant indices of industrial growth are: (1) the steady increases registered during the last decade in such basic industries as oil refining, electric energy, natural gas, and coal; cement and construction materials, and the manufacture of metals and rubber products; (2) the important gains made in the production of consumer goods; and (3) the rise in per capita production by roughly 50 per cent.

The production index in the following major industrial groups, averaged together, had risen to 383 by the end of the period 1948-1957: food and beverages, textiles and ready-made clothes, leather goods, tobacco, paper and cardboard, printing, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, lumber, metals, rubber, construction materials, electric energy, and oil refining.

The notable progress achieved in the industrial sector of the economy has been due primarily to the economic policies of the government and to the collective efforts of private industry and official agencies to develop basic industries according to a well-defined plan. As regards state protection of domestic industries, the government requires that the industries be basic ones in the overall economy; that they utilize domestic raw materials as well as domestic labor; that they consistently improve the quality of their products; and that they produce essential items for mass consumption or

for the development of backward areas. The government assists such basic industries by means of a high protective tariff, the requirement of import licenses for certain articles not produced internally, exemption from import duties on capital goods and raw materials essential to industrial development, and subsidies to ease temporary crises.

The development of the domestic economy has been supported by a high rate of investment, which has averaged 22 per cent of total production in the post-war period; locally financed investment accounts for four-fifths of the total. The reinvestment of earnings from the petroleum industry by the government and the flow of private investment capital from abroad have supported the high rate of economic development achieved by Venezuela during the past decade. A continuation of this process would provide in the future for an inflow of essential capital goods, a substantial rise in national production, and an increase in imports.

To attain these and other objectives, the Venezuelan Government adopted a long-range economic planning program in 1959. This includes, among major projects, expansion of the petrochemical and steel industries and the industrialization of the Guayana region by means of power supplied by the Caroní River electrification plan, sponsored by the Venezuelan Development Corporation. The country's first atomic reactor, with a capacity of 3,000 kilowatts, is expected to be completed and in operation in 1960.

Foreign Trade

During the last 40 years Venezuela's export-import trade has changed radically in volume, value, and composition. Until 1924 coffee was the chief export commodity, but since that year petroleum exports have risen steadily to the point where they now represent 95 per cent of the total; they consist of crude oil, gasoline, jet fuel, Diesel oil, fuel oil, and refined products. In terms of value, iron ore ranks second and coffee third among the principal export commodities, followed by sugar, cacao, diamonds, gold, sisal, corn, and hides.

From various countries of the world, principally the United States, Venezuela imports the following articles (by major groups): agricultural machinery and implements; earth-leveling equipment and tractors; well-drilling machinery, apparatus, tools, and spare parts; automobiles and other motor vehicles; locomotives and rolling stock; motors and engines; iron and steel for construction, pipes and fittings; paper and paperboard, including newsprint; radio and television receivers; refrigerators and other domestic appliances; pharmaceutical specialties and industrial chemicals; and food products, including wheat flour.

Venezuela sells the bulk of its export products to the United States and is generally the leading importer (in Latin America) of United States export commodities. The mounting reciprocal trade between the two countries is indicated by the fact that Venezuela's purchases from the United States in 1957 amounted to \$1,049,600,000, or twenty-five times the prewar level. In 1958 Venezuela's imports from the United States declined by more than two million dollars and its exports to the United States stood at \$894,600,000. Venezuela's trade with the Federal Republic of Germany has increased rapidly in recent years and now ranks second to that with the United States; West Germany's exports to Venezuela now represent 8.4 per cent of its total imports, followed by 7.3 from Great Britain and 6.6 from Italy. Venezuela also carries on a significant export-import trade with France, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Argentina, and Brazil.

Banking and Public Finance

The monetary system of Venezuela is based on the gold standard; and it is significant that the official gold parity of the currency has not been changed since 1879, making it one of the "hardest" in the world today. The unit of currency is the *bolívar*, equivalent to about 30 cents U.S. Gold coins are no longer in circulation, having been replaced by notes issued by the Central Bank in denominations of 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 40, 20, and 10 bolívares. Silver coins are circulated in denominations of five and two bolívares; also one bolívar and 50 and 25 centimos.

National fiscal policy and administration are vested in the Ministry of Finance, the Comptroller's Office, the Superintendent of Banks, and the National Banking Council—the latter being composed of representatives of all the banks in the country. At the top of the banking structure is the Central Bank of Venezuela, organized in 1940 as a corporation and an official government agency; it regulates the issue and circulation of money, rediscount operations, monetary reserves, and foreign exchange transactions and serves as a clearing house for other banks.

There are four credit or lending agencies established by the government for the purpose of promoting the development of major sectors of the national economy. Two of the largest of these agencies—the Venezuelan Development Corporation and the Agricultural and Livestock Bank—own and operate a number of enterprises in addition to extending loans to promote industry, agriculture, stock-raising, and fisheries. The Development Corporation, an autonomous institution subordinate to the Ministry of Development, promotes national production through many channels, including technical studies and assistance.

The Industrial Bank was organized for the purpose of protecting and promoting the domestic processing, manufacturing, and mining industries by granting loans to private enterprises requiring capital for expansion and for the establishment of new industries. The chief purpose of the Workers' Bank is to finance the construction and operation of low-cost housing. These agencies have been, and continue to be, a vital factor in the rapid growth of the national economy. The country's expanding economy has stimulated a marked increase in the number of private banks which now number 33, including at least five foreign banks. Venezuela's first private mortgage bank was established in 1958, mainly to help finance the construction and purchase of individual homes.

During the last few decades Venezuela's tremendous reserves of petroleum and iron ore have stimulated a steady inflow of foreign investment capital which is estimated today at around five billion dollars. Of this

amount, more than three billions, or roughly 65 per cent of the total, has been invested by United States interests, principally the oil companies. According to a survey of foreign investment conducted by the Central Bank of Venezuela in 1956, capital from abroad was invested as follows: petroleum, 84 per cent; mining, six per cent; industry, four per cent; and the balance in construction, business, banking, and service industries.

Over a considerable period of time, governmental policies have created a favorable investment climate by permitting the free importation and exportation of capital by both nationals and foreigners. The latter are free to engage in virtually all business activities under the same conditions as Venezuelan nationals, provided that 75 per cent of the employees of foreign companies are Venezuelans. There are no restrictions on the purchase or sale of foreign exchange, or on the import or export of capital.

The national budget for the fiscal year 1958-59 reflected the country's expanding needs. Equivalent in dollars to approximately \$1,745,520,000, the budget allocated 34 per cent of the total to public works, including important projects well underway; and increased considerably the appropriations for public education, sanitation, and social security.

Travel Information

Entry requirements, customs regulations, and transportation routes and schedules are subject to change. Therefore, when planning your trip, you should obtain the latest information from the nearest Venezuelan Consulate, a local travel agency, steamship or airline companies, or from the Inter-American Tourist Service of the Pan American Union.*

Entry Requirements

For a visit of 30 days or less, the following documents are required to obtain a Tourist Card from the Venezuelan Consulate: (1) A valid passport; (2) certificate of vaccination against smallpox not older than three years; (3) letter from a bank or commercial establishment attesting to the solvency of the traveler and his status as a bona fide tourist, making a trip for pleasure and not

International Communications

Transportation within Venezuela

for business purposes; (4) four full-face photographs (2 in. x 1½ in.); and (5) return trip ticket. The 30-day Tourist Card will not be extended.

For a stay of more than 30 days, the Venezuelan Consulate will issue a Tourist Card good for six months (not subject to renewal) upon presentation of the above documents and a general health certificate not more than six months old.

The Consulate will also issue a special permit for a stay of 48 hours to members of organized tours, provided the agency in charge of the tour guarantees their maintenance during that period; health and vaccination certificates are required to obtain this 48-hour permit.

Visas are not required of travelers in transit who remain less than 36 hours in the country and have a ticket and vaccination certificate, nor of through-passengers on ships calling at Venezuelan ports. Commercial travelers and those intending to work in Venezuela should apply for a business, or *transeunte*, visa.

International Communications

Many international airlines and steamship companies provide scheduled passenger and cargo services to Venezuela from the United States, Latin American countries, and other parts of the world. These include two Venezuelan airlines: the government-owned Línea Aero-postal Venezolana (LAV), which flies routes between Venezuela and the United States and Europe, including regular flights between New York and Caracas; and Aerovías Venezolanas, (AVENSA), which operates a regular service between New Orleans and Caracas via Maracaibo.

* As part of its informational services, the Inter-American Tourist Service publishes the following: *The Pan American Highway System*, 50 cents; *Requirements for Entry of United States Tourists into the Latin American Republics*, 10 cents; *Directory of Hotels—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela*, 10 cents; and other current material. Orders should be addressed to the Office of Publications Services, Pan American Union, Washington 6, D.C.

The Pan American Highway is the main route of overland transportation between Venezuela and Colombia. Communications between Venezuela and the East Coast of South America are maintained by airlines and by ships navigating the Orinoco River, since no roads exist through the Guiana Highlands and Amazon Basin.

In addition to nationwide telephone, telegraph, and radio-telephone services, Venezuela has radio-telephone connections with New York and international cable communications with all parts of the world.

Transportation within Venezuela

Air transport provides the country with its most extensive and efficient means of transportation. A network of domestic air routes flown by LAV and AVENSA links Venezuela's principal cities, ports, and industrial and mining centers, serving the most remote regions.

Highway and railway construction in Venezuela has always been very difficult and costly due to the mountainous terrain and other geographical obstacles. Therefore, the principal overland routes are the Pan American Highway and the Trans-Andean Highway already described. The country's highway system is being developed in accordance with a master plan aimed at coordinating it with railway, river, sea, and air transport facilities. This plan includes completion of sectors connecting Valencia with Lake Maracaibo by a direct east-west route; paving of the new coastal route from Caracas to Barcelona; and termination of the Falcón Highway from Morón to Lake Maracaibo via Coro.

Venezuela's limited railway trackage is concentrated at present in the five north central states. However, a new railway system for the country is already underway; the first sector of 108 miles of the Puerto Cabello-Barquisimeto branch was completed by the government and inaugurated early in 1959. The government program also includes the rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail lines.

With a coastline of 1,750 miles and roughly 10,000 miles of navigable inland waterways, Venezuela depends heavily upon shipping for domestic cargo and

passenger transportation. There is coastwise and river transportation between the Caribbean ports, Margarita Island, and such strategic river ports as Ciudad Bolívar, San Fernando de Apure, and Puerto Ordaz.

If you wish to tour the country in your own car, you may bring it into the country duty free; however, immediately upon arrival, you are required to contact the Touring and Automobile Club of Venezuela and to state the value of your car and date of your departure.

Detailed travel information may be obtained from the government tourist bureau in the Ministry of Development in Caracas (Dirección de Turismo, Ministerio de Fomento), from the Touring and Automobile Club of Venezuela, and other local and international travel agencies with headquarters in Caracas.

Currency and Prices

U.S. dollars are exchanged for Venezuelan *bolívars* (Bs.) at the rate of Bs. 3.33 to the dollar, as of December 1959. The relatively high price level in Venezuela—by comparison with countries having devaluated currencies—is largely due to the country's "hard" and stable currency. Most hotels and restaurants charge about the same prices as those of the same category in the United States; the same is true of entertainment. For certain imports, such as U.S. cigarets, you will pay approximately double.

Hotels and Restaurants

The luxurious hotels of the capital and the leading resorts are part of the government's ambitious program to promote tourism. A hotel corporation is in charge of the building and management of hotels throughout the country and runs a school for the training of hotel personnel. The larger hotels have swimming pools and provide all the facilities to which travelers are accustomed in first class hotels in the United States.

As in other cosmopolitan capitals, the hotels and restaurants of Caracas offer an international cuisine appealing to visitors from all parts of the world. The numerous restaurants include French, Italian, Spanish,

Mexican, Chinese, and others. For variety, one should try some of the typical Venezuelan dishes which come under the heading of *comida criolla* (creole cooking) and include, among others, *arroz con pollo* (chicken with rice), *pabellón* (meat with rice and fried bananas), *hallacas*, similar to Mexican tamales, *pastel de Maracay* (turtle meat potpie), *sancocho* (a meat or fish stew), and *arepa* (white corn bread). Venezuela's tropical fruits are numerous and delicious. Coffee and chocolate are noted for their fine flavor. Drinking water is chlorinated in the capital and larger cities; however, in remote areas and small towns where purification systems do not exist, it is advisable to drink bottled water.

Handicrafts

Venezuelan craftsmen are noted for a variety of handmade articles which can be bought in Caracas, or on trips to different sections of the country in which they are made. The most famous items of jewelry are those of *oro cochano*—exquisitely wrought flowers of pure nugget gold brightened with dewdrop pearls. From the Island of Margarita come pearls and articles beautifully decorated with mother-of-pearl. Many handsome objects are made of native tortoise shell and horn. There are also carved boxes and chests of fine native hardwoods. The women of the country make very delicate lace and do fine embroidering. Hammocks made of fiber or cotton are another specialty. From the llanos come articles of leather, alligator skin, and feathers. Straw hats and sandals woven of gaily colored cotton make attractive souvenirs to take home. These and many other typical articles of the country may be seen and purchased at cost in the exhibit rooms maintained by the Ministerio de Fomento in the Lustgarten Building on Andrés Bello Avenue, Caracas. One may also shop in the many private establishments in the capital.

Suitable Clothing

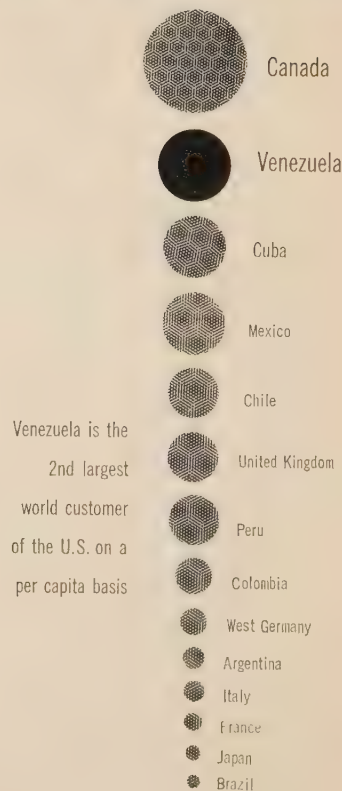
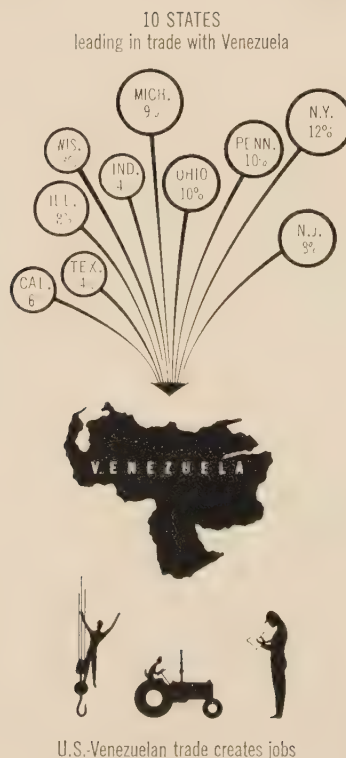
What to wear in Venezuela depends upon the regions you intend to visit—the higher the altitude, the cooler the climate, particularly after sundown. In Caracas, tropical worsteds and spring clothing are comfortable;

men are expected to wear their jackets and shorts are frowned upon. Washable tropical clothing will be needed in the Maracaibo lowlands and the hot Caribbean areas. A trip to the highland regions and the Andes calls for a light topcoat and a sweater or woolen sports jacket. A raincoat or umbrella should be included in your travel wardrobe.

Those who visit Venezuela find it a country of great natural beauty, with a glorious past and present in which modern progress lives side by side with tradition. Here where North meets South, awaiting ycu, in Venezuela—a land of the future.

Venezuelan imports from the United States and other countries

Charts on this page by courtesy
of the Creole Petroleum Corporation



Area: 352,150 square miles
 Capital: Caracas
 Official language: Spanish

Population: 6,800,000*
 Population: 1,200,000*
 Unit of currency: the *bolívar*
 (equal to about \$.30 U.S.)

National flower: *Flor de mayo*, a pale lavender orchid

Flag: three horizontal stripes of equal width—yellow, blue,
 and red from top to bottom

*Official estimates, 1959

Political Subdivisions	Area (in square kilometers) ¹	Population ²	Capitals	Population
Federal District	1,930	1,130,700	Caracas	795,690 ³
Anzoátegui	43,300	333,950	Barcelona	44,335
Apure	76,500	104,026	San Fernando	18,410
Aragua	5,600	237,880	Maracay	108,885
Barinas	35,200	94,024	Barinas	22,995
Bolívar	238,000	157,200	Ciudad Bolívar	44,000
Carabobo	4,650	285,500	Valencia	128,820
Cojedes	14,800	53,960	San Carlos	12,060
Falcón	24,800	273,914	Coro	41,120
Guárico	66,400	187,158	San Juan de los Morros	25,927
Lara	19,800	388,200	Barquisimeto	176,153
Mérida	11,300	220,442	Mérida	38,250
Miranda	7,950	313,330	Los Teques	22,938
Monagas	28,900	226,430	Maturín	48,750
Nueva Esparta	1,150	79,506	La Asunción	4,870
Portuguesa	15,200	155,380	Guanare	15,243
Sucre	11,800	361,500	Cumaná	72,780
Táchira	11,100	350,150	San Cristóbal	81,985
Trujillo	7,400	276,425	Trujillo	17,715
Yaracuy	7,100	134,185	San Felipe	26,065
Zulia	63,100	799,000	Maracaibo	394,885
Federal Territories				
Amazonas	175,750	23,500	Puerto Ayacucho	7,922
Delta Amacuro	40,200	37,678	Tucupita	16,170

¹ One Square kilometer equals 0.3861 square miles.

² According to the National Census of November, 1957.

³ Metropolitan area.

10 Apr '61

9 May '63

27 Jun '63

13 Dec '63

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The Organization of American States (OAS) is an international organization created by the 21 American republics to achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. The member states are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The ideal of Western Hemisphere unity was conceived by the Liberator Simón Bolívar and found its first expression in the Treaty of Union signed at the Congress of Panama in 1826. The present organization is an outgrowth of the International Union of American Republics, created in 1890 during the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C.

The inter-American system was reorganized and given its present name in a Charter adopted at the Ninth International Conference of American States (Bogotá, Colombia, 1948). The Charter brought together the principles of American law that had developed during the preceding years; it also specified the organs or agencies through which the Organization was to accomplish its purposes. The OAS now functions through six principal organs:

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1. The Inter-American Conference, supreme organ of the Organization, which meets every five years to decide general action and policy.
2. The Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which meets on request to consider problems of an urgent nature and of common interest, and which serves as the Organ of Consultation to deal with threats to the peace and security of the Continent.
3. The Council, which is composed of one representative from each state. It may act provisionally as Organ of Consultation. The Council has three organs: the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, the Inter-American Council of Jurists, and the Inter-American Cultural Council.
4. The Pan American Union, which is the central and permanent organ and General Secretariat of the OAS, with headquarters in Washington, D.C.
5. The Inter-American Specialized Conferences, which deal with special technical matters and develop specific aspects of inter-American cooperation.
6. The Inter-American Specialized Organizations, which have specific functions with respect to technical matters of common interest to the American states. There are six such agencies: The Inter-American Children's Institute, the Inter-American Commission of Women, the Inter-American Indian Institute, the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History.

Through these organs and agencies, the OAS functions effectively to strengthen the peace and security of the Continent; to prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes; to provide for common action in the event of aggression; to seek the solution of political, juridical, and economic problems that may arise among the American states; and to promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social and cultural development.

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